ACROSS / A17
Double treat: Mayon plus whale sharks

BUSINESS / B1
GSIS sells 12.7% stake in EPCIB for P8.7 billion

ACROSS / A15
100 GIs held at Zamboanga immigration

METRO / A19
Graft raps filed at Sandiganbayan vs Binay, 10 others

Menthol cigarettes give stronger hit but deadlier

CHICAGO—SMOKERS of menthol cigarettes find it harder to quit than those smoking regular cigarettes, according to a new research released early this week.

This may explain why MENTHOL, A11

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Thursday, September 28, 2006 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 282 P18 online: www.inq7.net

Sun lights up Zambo village even at night

By Blanche S. Rivera

MALAWIE, ZAMBOANGA DEL NORTE—AFTER decades of darkness, residents of Barangay Marcelo in this remote town 387 kilometers southwest of the provincial capital would not have to spend P120 for a "habal-habal" (motorcycle) to take them to the nearest store selling kerosene.

SUN LIGHTS, A19

'Milenyo' heads for Metro; no classes

By Alcuin Papa, Blanche S. Rivera and Inquirer Southern Luzon and Visayas

PREPARING FOR HEAVY RAINS SWAYED by Typhoon "Milenyo" (international name: Xangsane), the Department of Education suspended classes today in all elementary and high schools in Metro Manila.

In an advisory, Education Secretary Jesli Lapus yesterday said that classes were also suspended in Bulacan, Laguna, Batangas, Cavite and Rizal provinces.

The Commission on Higher Education has yet to announce the suspension of classes in the college level.

Classes in all levels were already suspended yesterday in Legazpi City. As of 4 p.m. yesterday, the eye of the storm was spotted 50 kilometers east of the city.

Lapus said elementary and high school classes in Metro Manila and five provinces were suspended on the recommendation of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

"Since 1995, there has been no strong typhoon that has crossed this close to Manila," Nathaniel Cruz, the chief weather forecaster, told reporters, after the capital's alert level was raised.

Milenyo gained strength when it made landfall in Catarman, Northern Samar, early morning yesterday before blowing into Bicol, where hundreds of passengers were stranded and sea voyage was stopped.

Traveling west northwest with winds of 120 km per hour near the center and gusts of up to 150 kph, Milenyo was spotted by Pagasa in the vicinity of Sorsogon.

"The typhoon is now south of Bicol, and our models suggest that it will traverse the south of Manila, meaning Cavite, Laguna, etc.," Cruz said.

Milenyo is expected to be 110 km east of Metro Manila this afternoon.

MILENYO?, A10

Tropical Storm 'Milenyo'

GMA orders retake of nursing exams

DOLE, PRC to thresh out details of new tests today

By Christine O. Avendaño

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo has ordered the retake of the June nursing board examination to redeem the image of Filipino nurses here and abroad, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita announced yesterday.

Ermita said Labor Secretary Arturo Brion was to meet today with officials of the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) to discuss the details of the retake of the exam that was marred by a leakage of test questions.

He also said Ms Arroyo had assigned the supervision of the PRC to the Department of Labor and Employment. Prior to the leakage controversy the PRC was attached to the Office of the President.

(See related story on Page A8.)

"As to whether it will be a retake of

GOV'T DECIDES, A8

CRACKED GLASS. Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita inspects the bullet marks on a security-laminated glass during a Wednesday conference on business and counterterrorism in Manila.

AP

Cha-cha bid's fate rests on 5 areas

By Armand N. Nocum and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE FATE OF CHARTER CHANGE through a people's initiative now rests on five legislative districts where the groups Sigaw ng Bayan and Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (Ulap) reportedly failed to secure the required signatures of at least 3 percent of the registered voters in each district.

Toward the end of the more than nine hours of oral arguments at the Supreme Court on Tuesday night, Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban ordered the Charter change proponents to show proof that this constitutional requirement had been met.

"If it is true that the 3-percent minimum requirement was not reached even in one congressional district, it will be the end of the petition [for Charter change through a people's initiative] and will be dismissed," Panganiban told Bernardo Pardo, lawyer of Sigaw and a former chair of the Commission on Elections.

"All parties are given 15 days from today (Tuesday) to submit memoranda whether the 3 percent was reached in all legislative districts in the country. After 15 days, the issue is deemed submitted for decision with or without the memoranda," the Chief Justice said.

Thus, he said, the concerned parties were required to prove their case "according to the best documents in their possession."

Sigaw and Ulap's purported failure to meet the 3-percent requirement was raised by former South Cotabato Rep. Ludivi

CHA-CHA BID'S, A4

Gov't rejects MILF demand for bigger ARMM

Bolante: US using me as pawn to free 4 US Marines

By Philip C. Tubeza

FORMER AGRICULTURE UNDERSECRETary Jocelyn "Joc-joc" Bolante has accused the US government of using him as a "pawn" to secure the release of four American Marines accused of raping a 23-year-old Filipino woman at the Subic Bay Freeport last year.

To support his contention, Bolante submitted to the Wisconsin district court hearing his habeas corpus petition a copy of an Inquirer report on Sept. 16 on a claim by the alleged rape victim's mother that the head of the prosecution team had proposed a settlement with the accused Marines.

"Counsels for petitioner have discovered additional information demonstrating that Bolante is likely being used as a

BOLANTE, A6

SENATE President Manny Villar gestures shortly after the Commission on Appointments approved the promotion of Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon on Wednesday. (Story on Page A2.)

AP

THE GOVERNMENT YESTERDAY REjected's demand by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front to expand a Muslim autonomous region without holding a referendum, raising prospects of a prolonged impasse in peace talks.

The government remains firm in its position that the region cannot be expanded unless residents in affected areas approve the move in a plebiscite, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said.

Malaysia-brokered talks between the government and the MILF the largest Muslim group fighting for self-rule in the southern Philippines, hit a snag early this month over the issue.

The MILF wants to include 613 Muslim-dominated barangays in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao without any plebiscite.

"We will stand pat on our position that we must follow the constitutional process," Ermita told reporters a day after government negotiators and Cabinet security officials agreed on the position.

MILF chair Murad Ebrahim has blamed the government for the stalled talks and warned that negotiations could collapse if the government does not take them seriously.

GOV'T REJECTS, A10

MILF Chair Murad Ebrahim meets rebel commanders in Camp Darapanan in Sultan Kudarat on Monday.

AFP

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

RP to miss safe water target

INDIA AND CHINA ARE LIKELY to meet 100-per target for access to safe drinking water by 2015, but four other Asian nations are expected to fail, the Asian Development Bank said Wednesday.

Indonesia is one country to miss the safe water target as well as a 2X goal for improved sanitation, while Pakistan, the Philippines and Vietnam may meet sanitation but not the water target, the Manila-based lender said.

In 2000, world leaders agreed to a set of Millennium Development Goals that included cutting in half by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to drinking water and improved sanitation.

In 2002, about 786 million people in the Asia-Pacific region were still without safe water supplies and some two billion had inadequate or no toilet facilities, the bank said. Since then investments to address the problems have fallen seriously behind demands across the region, it said.

ADB President Haruhiko Kuroda moved at the opening of a two-day conference Tuesday that improvements on other UN development indicators, including income levels, hunger, communicable diseases, maternal and child mortality rates and environmental sustainability, "all base, one factor in common: water."

"Water has become everyone's business, and therefore a national development issue" that requires coordination and leadership, not only of the water sector but also finance and planning agencies, civil society, the private sector and development institutions, he said.

The conference, which brings together officials and experts from India, Indonesia, Pakistan, the Philippines and Vietnam, aims to accelerate water investments in the countries by identifying barriers to investments and ways to overcome them. The investment would provide 200 million people with safe drinking water and improved sanitation, it said. AP

Double victory for Esperon

Jinggoy no show at hearing; AFP chief admits meeting with senator

By TJ Burgonio

FINALLY, HE CAN WEAR HIS four stars to any official function without raising eyebrows.

In a surprising turn of events, Armed Forces Chief Gen. Hermogenes Esperon yesterday breezed through the Commission on Appointment without any objections being posed, getting confirmation for his three- and four-star ranks in one day.

Esperon's birth-day "double confirmation" came about after opposition Sen. Jinggoy Estrada failed to show up at the CA caucus and plenary to question the military chief's decision to grant him the alleged role in the "Hello Garci" wiretapping scandal.

Esperon admitted that he had "exploratory talks" with Estrada a few days ago.

"There's nothing really that was bad between us. We had [been friends. I intend] to respect him. We understand each other," he said of Estrada.

With the lone senator opposing Esperon out of the way, members of the CA defense committee agreed at a caucus to confirm his appointment and promotion to the rank of lieutenant general, and to full general as a last plenary session.

Only the AFP chief's appointment to three-star rank was on the agenda of yesterday's plenary. Up until the caucus started, his fate was uncertain.

Opposition Sen. Jinggoy Estrada III earlier announced no-border Iranian 20 of the CA rules at the plenary, during which legislators are given the privilege to defer appointments without explanation or question, if Senate asked him to do so.

During the course of the CA defense committee, however, Osmeña rose to inform the body that Estrada had called to say he was withdrawing his objection because he could not find the time to attend the session as he had to attend to a son who was stricken with dengue.

Senate President Manuel Villar and Sen. Jamby Aviso Madrigal, chair of the defense committee, defended the body's decision to confirm Esperon's ranks, appointments at the same time even though only his promotion to three-star rank was on the agenda.

No big deal

"It must be consensus of the members of the Commission on Appointments that it was done in accordance with the rules and precedents. Since there was no more objection, everything was clear for their confirmation. There's no big deal about this confirmation," Villar said.

"There were no more impediments. Why let him be bypassed?" added Romualdo.

Esperon was appointed to three-star rank in August 2005. He was bypassed when Congress adjourned in early June after Estrada and Osmeña signified that they intended to interrogate him at the resumption of sessions in late July.

He took over the top AFP post on July 21, a position that carries four-star rank.

"I'm so happy with this double confirmation. I was expecting to be confirmed as lieutenant general but the Commission on Appointments has so graciously given me the fourth star and I sincerely thank them," seven-star Esperon told reporters.

A total of 66 other senior officials, including 11 generals, were also confirmed.

"What can I do?"

Estrada later said: "What can I do? It's the majority who confirmed him."

He said he had "nothing against" the AFP chief and that he had only wanted to ask him some questions on the wiretapping scandal.

In June 2005, wiretaps surfaced that purportedly showed President Macapagal-Arroyo and then Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano conspiring to rig the results of the 2004 presidential vote. Esperon was one of the military officials implicated in the fraud.

Esperon himself credited Estrada, among others, for his smooth confirmation. He said the talks with the senator had been arranged by a friend.

"I don't think I have to convince anybody," he said when asked how he convinced Estrada to withdraw his motion.

"We took this up based on enlightened discussion and willingness to accommodate each other," he said.

Estrada confirmed meeting with Esperon, and said he was satisfied with the general's explanation that he had no hand in the fraud allegedly perpetrated in the 2004 elections.

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Ermita to Defensor: Don't talk too much

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE PRESIDENT'S PET CABINET official should not talk too much, according to the "Little Pres-ident."

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said he has advised Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor to be more circumspect about political matters "because he is very popular and anything that comes from him is picked up by media."

Ermita said he told Defensor not to "make any more statements because these are distracting many from our agenda."

Defensor took the advice good-naturedly. The two just laughed and joked about it, said Ermita.

"But I repeated my message to him not to talk so much," he said.

"I don't think he's talking too much up. He's just worried that every little sentence, all of them are reflections on the President's performance in relation to the 2007 elections," Ermita said.

Ermita also said Defensor's announcement a few weeks ago that retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan was being considered for deputy security adviser.

Ermita was forced to issue a denial as it was Palparan's colleague, retired Maj. Gen. Pedro Cabuag, who was picked by President Macapagal-Arroyo for the post.

Ermita was again forced to make a denial a few days ago to counter the misimpression created by Defensor's announcement that several Cabinet officials were planning to run for the Senate next year.

"It's statements are his personal opinion. I am not interested in running for senator and I have no intention. He just mentioned us as those being considered and he took it out of this air," Ermita said.

He noted that the others that Defensor mentioned as being possible administration senatorial candidates like Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya had to come out to deny having such ambitions.

He said the government could not be seen to be making plans for the senatorial elections when it was actively campaigning for a shift to a parliamentary system.

"We are, that is not the time to talk about the political line-up in next year's elections. But I thank him Defensor] for not forgetting me when he floated names of possible senatorial candidates for the administration," Ermita said.

In yet another controversial statement, Defensor last Tuesday said that Malacañang was seriously considering freezing the assets of politicos [President Estrada] to prevent him from using the funds to bankroll destabilization plots.

Ermita said there was no such Estrada order.

Airports may ease security measures

THE UNITED STATES decision to relax its ban on liquids and gels has moved the country's aviation security officials to review the security protocol for the Philippines.

Office of the Transportation Security Co-ordination Director Rafael Seguis said that he has scheduled a call from the US Transportation Security Administration on the relaxing of US restrictions.

He stressed that there are no plans to relax Philippine security protocols as for, but aviation security officials will meet with airline representatives to review the measures.

The Philippines had followed expanded security measures worldwide, which included disallowing hand-carried liquids and gels on all domestic and international flights, last month following a failed bombing plot in Britain to use liquid explosives on US-bound airliners.

Recently, however, airline operators expressed support for relaxed restrictions in order to lessen inconvenience to passengers. They pressed aviation officials that individual airline operators observe their own security measures on top of those being implemented at the country's airports.

DOH tops anti-corruption list; BIR is 4th

THE GOVERNMENT'S anti-corruption report card for the first semester of the year gives the Department of Health top honors for its anti-corruption efforts, while the worst marks went to the Department of Justice.

Others in the top 10 among 79 agencies monitored by the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission (PAGC) were the Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of Science and Technology, Bureau of Internal Revenue, Department of Trade and Industry, Office of the President, Department of Education, Department of Public Works and Highways, the Philippine National Police and the Metro Manila Development Authority.

At the bottom were the DOJ, the Department of Tourism, the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board, the Department of Agriculture, and the Bureau of Immigration.

The PAGC integrity evaluation program is being held in connection with the Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia and the Pacific of the Asian Development Bank and the 27-member Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which has made good governance one of its priority concerns.

BIR Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag told the inquirer he was particularly proud of the BIR's fourth place standing because it was the first time the tax collection agency ever appeared in the top 10, breaking its long perceived reputation as one of the most corrupt agencies in government.

Buñag noted that the BIR exceeded its collection goal during the first six months of this year. He attributed this to their successful tax collection campaign, as well as to the infusion of honesty and integrity in the tax collection functions.

Buñag has also launched a program to improve customer service in the bureau and to assure greater tax compliance among the people through intensified tax education.

To improve tax collections, the BIR launched several action plans, including profiling and benchmarking of industries, intensification of collection, more rigid surveillance of business tax compliance, implementation of the computer-assisted audit programs in regional offices, tax stoppage measures and incentives to taxpayers for full compliance with tax laws and regulations.

Cynthia D. Rebong

ROADMAP TO ENERGY SELF-SUFFICIENCY Series 3

Good News for the Filipino Consumers: An Advance Merry Christmas in September

Weekly Oil Price Rollbacks, NO Transport Fare Hike, Prices of Basic Commodities & Electricity Rates to Remain Stable

Based on the decision of OPEC member countries to sustain their current oil production levels of 28 million barrels, even though demand is slowing and inventories are growing, the Consumer & Oil Price Watch (**COPW**) sees weekly rollbacks in the prices of petroleum products in the coming months.

In addition, non-OPEC member countries are producing more and many countries like the Philippines are looking at alternatives to crude oil like ethanol, geothermal, hydro, wind power, coal, natural gas, & bio-diesel.

COPW is optimistic that with the strengthening of the peso, electricity rates will stabilize, prices of basic commodities will not increase, and there will be no increase in transport fares.

Despite this good news, we should not be too complacent as the Philippines could be on the verge of another power crisis.

Our current power facilities are old, antiquated, and obsolete. They cannot sustain the increasing demand for power. As it is, we may be experiencing rotating brownouts as early as the summer of 2008, when the hydro-power plants are at their lowest level.

To make things worse, the 600 MW Mirant Sual (Pangasinan) coal-fired plant broke down and will take **6 to 8 MONTHS to REPAIR.** This coincided with the scheduled maintenance of one unit of the 700 MW Mirant Pagbilao (Quezon) coal-fired power plant. This forced NPC to run power plants using **the more expensive bunker fuel and diesel plants resulting in the increase in WESM (Wholesale Electricity Spot Market) prices.**

Thus, COPW urges Congress & the Office of the President to amend the EPIRA Law (RA 9136), before Congress goes on recess on December 15, in order to avert another power crisis.

These amendments will allow more foreign investments to bring in the much needed capital to build NEW power plants to generate the additional **4,438 MW** power requirements up to 2010.

COPW proposes the following essential amendments to the EPIRA Law:

1. **For Congress to privatize TRANSCO by granting the winning bidder a 25-year congressional franchise to operate.**
2. **For Congress to lower the required privatization of NPC assets from 70% to 50%.** ***Today, ONLY 19.5 % of the NPC power plants are privatized.***
3. **Make the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) *truly* Independent so that decisions will NOT be subject to review by the courts.**
4. **Amend the NPC Charter (RA 6395) to *remove the NPC exemption from the payment of taxes.* This will bring the total installed capacity whose income tax holidays will expire on December 2008 to 83% and on December 2008 to 95% of installed capacity.**
5. **For Congress & the Senate to review & pass the following Bills before Congress adjourns on December 15th, namely:**
   - **BioFuels Act - Senate Bill No. 2226 & House Bill No. 4629.**
   - **House Bill No. 5515 - the Downstream Natural Gas Industry Development Act of 2006.**
   - **Senate Bill No. 2411 - An Act Harmonizing the Grant & Administration of Fiscal & NON-Fiscal Incentives.**
   - **House Bill on Fiscal Incentives.**

COPW will meet with DOF, DOE, PSALM, TRANSCO & NPC officials to request for an update on the Credit Suisse First Boston (CPSB) and Sycip Gorres Velayo & Co. (SGV&AA) on the electricity industry restructuring to the Senate Energy Committee, on September 15, 2006, in the light that the conditions six years ago have significantly changed.

The COPW will submit its position paper to the House and Senate Committees on Energy and the Committee on Ways and Means chairmen on the above mentioned Bills in the Week of October 8th.

For online posting of COPW issues, log on to http://groups.yahoo.com/group/COPW/

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Jinggoy fumes over Palace plan to freeze Erap assets

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

SEN. JINGGOY ESTRADA YESTERDAY BLASTED Malacañang's reported plan to freeze more assets of his detained father, President Joseph Estrada, to prevent him from funding destabilization attempts against the Arroyo administration.

"Let me put on record that my father has no plans of destabilizing this government. We have never been involved in destabilizing this government because it is already destabilizing itself," Jinggoy said in a speech in the Senate.

He said Malacañang's plan was "very, very unfair."

"Why is it that every time this administration commits blunders, they always blame my father? he said. "President Estrada is living a very quiet life. He hasn't visited Ayala for months."

Jinggoy said his mother, Sen. Luisa "Loi" Estrada, and their aunts have already been there after his father was charged with plunder.

"What more is he talking about?" Jinggoy asked of Presidential Chief of Staff Michael "Mike" Defensor.

"I think he is barking up the wrong tree," Jinggoy said.

Water execs meet

SOME 250 GENERAL MANAGERS AND board directors from 42 water districts in Northern Mindanao will meet today in Iligan City to discuss water supply issues.

The 24th Northern Mindanao Water Information Council Forum is hosted by the Iligan City Metropolitan Water District, which now serves 26,000 water clients of the district.

The forum will coincide with the inauguration of a P395-million modernization project of the Iligan water district funded by the Japan Bank of International Cooperation and the Philippine government through the Local Water Utilities Administration, according to Benjamin Tomonic Jr., general manager of the Iligan water district.

Tomonic said the project includes construction of dam intake, 32.3 kilometers of distribution lines, a 3,000 cubic-meter underground reservoir and a booster pump station.

Corrections

IN EARLY EDITIONS OF THE SEPT. 27 issue, the front-page banner story carried the erroneous headline—"4 justices question Dan.dia signatures." The story mentioned only three—not four—Supreme Court justices who questioned the authenticity of the 8.3 million signatures gathered by Charter change groups.

In the Sept. 21 issue, a story on Page A5—"Yasay, AFP chief face off at 'budget hearing'"—misspelled the name of the national security adviser. The correct spelling of the national security adviser's name is Norberto Gonzales—not Gonzalez.

The Daily Gospel

Thursday, September 28, 2006
Ss Lawrence Ruiz and Companions, Martyrs
Proper Saint

1st Reading: Sirach 1:2-10
Gospel: Luke 9:7-9

King Herod heard of all that Jesus was doing and did not know what to think, for people said, "This is John, raised from the dead." Others believed that Elijah or one of the ancient prophets had come back to life. As for Herod, he said, "I had John beheaded; who is this man about whom I hear such wonders?" And he was anxious to see him.

Commentary:

Folk wisdom that sounds like Jesus appears, everything passes away; all things are worthless, look to dying around. Nothing new on earth, nothing remembered. If Herod's fears are such a description of life does the one who says these things and then helps to look at it, not life itself, find it is echoed in the words of Herod who sees Jesus as just John the Baptist returning, for he is anxious to see Jesus.

Who of Jesus and his words can fit and hope and something new upon the earth? Jesus the Jew, then are a new thing for the world to be amazed at? And do we the redemption for non-anything people or Jesus did?

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Pimentel laughs off Abcede threat

By TJ Burgonio

SENATE MINORITY Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. yesterday laughed off as "a bit of nonsense" the threat by Philippine Commission on Good Government Commissioner Ricardo Abcede to have him cited for contempt for violating a gag order issued by the Supreme Court.

Pimentel dismissed it as an "empty threat" that had no legal basis, asserting that he had never commented on the case now pending before the high tribunal.

"Abcede's threat is for me for contempt is just a bit of nonsense. It won't prevent me from citing lily tevight of a ruling from a firm or which he was resigned," Pimentel said, referring to earlier reports that Abcede was gifted with a Toyota Camry by Philcomsat Holdings Corp., a recently sequestered company.

Pimentel clarified that in a statement he issued Sept. 26, he tackled the need to limit the adjournment of PCGG nominees to government-sequestered corporations and the need to abolish the commission the having outlived its usefulness.

Gag order

There were not the subject of a gag order by the high court, he stressed.

"I'd like to repeat that it had nothing to do with the gag order relative to the controversy between the Senate and the PCGG over EO No. 1. This is an entirely new matter and I don't think that anyone can prevent us from speaking out on these issues," he said.

EO 1, issued by President Aquino in February 1986, grants PCGG officials immunity from testifying in legislative, judicial and administrative proceedings.

Abcede had said that the PCGG was considering filing a motion in aim to contempt Pimentel and other individuals who "were contemptuously violating" the gag order.

After hearing the oral arguments on the petition for the issuance of a writ of habeas corpus filed by three PCGG chairs Camilo Sabio last week, the high court ordered Sabio's release from the Senate.

The Senate cited he contempt and issued arrest warrants against Sabio, four PCGG commissioners and five PNC executives after they repeatedly snubbed its inquiry into the alleged hiring of government-sequestered corporations. Only Sabio was arrested.

Order recalled

Meanwhile, Senate President Manuel "Manny" Villar Jr. said top police officials had given assurances they would recall an earlier order prohibiting policemen from serving Senate-issued arrest warrants during a dialogue last Tuesday

Palace tells gov't agencies to liquidate all advances

MALACAÑANG "YESTERDAY ordered all government agencies to settle unliquidated cash advances of P36.3 billion before the end of the year.

But Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita made clear that the unliquidated advances that Sec. Franklin Drilon has described as "alarming" were not necessarily improper under Arroyo's administration but in previous administrations as well.

He said President Macapagal-Arroyo wanted the advances—which amounted to P63.1 billion, not P37 billion as Drilon said—liquidated by yearend.

He said the measure also covered advances made by officials of jailed President Estrada and President Ramos.

"I still notice supposedly there are unliquidated cash advances of people under Cesarios Ramos," he said.

Drilon, the chair of the Senate finance committee, said the unliquidated cash advances of the entire government could translate to 60,000 documents and amounted to more than the budgets of many departments.

The opposition in the House of Representatives meanwhile said it would push for the abolition of the intelligence funds of the Executive and Cabinet officials to encourage it to intelligence work.

Minority leader Francis Escudero said that given the poverty situation in the country and the necessity of spending money for infrastructure and social services, "the President should take the lead in setting the correct example when it comes to frugality and non-spending." Gloria, Inq. Journals and Mig Sun.JCBon

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WE WILL BEAT OUR COMPETITION

Senate guards: same men, new uniforms

By Alcuin Papa

THEY'RE THE SAME MEN, BUT IN CHOPPER uniforms.

Policemen guarding the House and the Senate will no longer be wearing the uniforms of the INP's elite Special Action Force, according to Director General Oscar Calderon.

The same men from the SAF will be guarding Congress but they will be wearing the regular PNP's Police Security Protection Office (PSPO), Calderon said.

There are around 400 policemen guarding both houses of Congress. Some 120 of the SAF members have opted to remain in their Congress assignments and transfer to the PSPO.

The issue of the "re-deployment" of the SAF from the Senate came up in a meeting between Calderon and Senate President Manuel Villar the other day.

The issue came while Calderon was briefing Villar that there is an outburst, an order, no transfers. The uniforms are the only ones that changed actually," he said.

The men will no longer be wearing the camouflage uniforms because they will no longer be with the SAF. They will be wearing the regular PNP uniforms.

"That's what we call deactivating. But he is still the same person with the same training," Calderon said reporters.

He said the change came about after Malacañang ordered that the SAF be deployed in counter-insurgency operations. He said the SAF had over Congress security before returning it to the SAF pull-out.

He stressed that the move was not precipitated by the Senator's involving the SAF in the serving of the arrest warrant on Independent Commission on Good Governance chair Camilo Sabio.

This reportedly led to a "scolding" of the SAF members by their commanders, which in turn angered the senators.

Calderon earlier clarified that the PNP contingents in Congress were not supposed to be involved in the serving of arrest warrant but only to provide security for the Senate, the House and other vital installations.

He said any movement or outside of these units should be cleared with their commanders.

He said that with the transfer of the PSPO of the SAF men assigned to Congress, the PNP has begun replacing them with new troopers.

The administration hopes to make the SAF 100 percent counter-insurgency capable—considering that we now have 1 more year to focus intensified security operations," Calderon said.

He said the PNP was still in the 1st phase of its organizational realignment, grouping its 16 PNP contingents.

"We are not at 100 percent yet, we like the SAF which has been known to undertake counter-insurgency. We are focused on strengthening the defense posture of 46 police districts, strengthening the capability of SAF and training the ground mobile groups. All of these are organizational steps of the PNP," he said.

Calderon said the SAF would be ready to join counter-insurgency operations by the end of the year.

"We hope to have 209 armored personnel for all regional mobile groups so that every region has one battalion size unit which can operate in counter-insurgency. The second phase is equipment procurement," he said.

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ASIAN FORUM

Inquirer founding chair and Ramon Magsaysay awardee for journalism Eugenia D. Apostol speaks at the opening ceremonies of the Asian Forum 2004 on Corporate Social Responsibility (CFCSR) of the Asian Institute of Management as the Cremona Palace Hotel, World Bank Group President Paul Wolfowitz also spoke on Monday's opening. AIM-BMW Center Board of Advisers chair Ramon R. del Rosario Jr. officially opened the Asian Forum 2004. (**Photo** taken on the photo left to right) are AIM president Francis G. Estrada, Edgar Chua of Shell Philippines, Oscar M. Lopez of Rizal Commercial Banking Corp., Mitsuo Ito Hotel, Libre Iwatani, coordinator and UNDP resident representative in the Philippines Jo Scheller of Coca-Cola Export Corp., Roberto M. Laviña of Philtranco, MPI board co-chair Jose L. Cuisia Jr. of Philippine American Life and General Insurance Co. and AIM-JSVB Center executive director Felipe B. Alfonso.

Drilon sees more 'pork'

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

THE ADMINISTRATION AND ITS allies have a new source of pork barrel in the form of a P800-million scholarship program of the Technical Education Skills Development Authority, Sen. Franklin Drilon said yesterday.

"The 2005 budget of Tesda carries an appropriation of P800 million for scholarships all over the country of about 34,000 scholars," Drilon, chair of the Senate finance committee, said.

Drilon said this is under the Private Education Student Financial assistance and the PESFA [President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo] Training for Work Scholarship Project of Tesda.

The money is part of Tesda's proposed budget of P3.8 billion for 2005, which Drilon noted is more than half of Tesda's P5 billion budget.

"From the testimony of Director General Augusto Syjuco Jr., it would appear that these scholarships are allocated per congressional districts," Drilon said.

Drilon said the scholarship grants were supposedly based on the economic indicators showing unemployment in a particular region but would "be given to members of the congressional.

He said the scholarships would be given without any testing, mostly on the basis of slots allocated to the congressional districts.

"There is no degree or reason for this system, except that it is part of political patronage. We intend to examine this very closely as apparently it is part of the pork barrel funds inserted in the budget," Drilon said.

Drilon said the Tesda scholarships are similar to the GMA Scholarships given during the 2004 presidential campaign period.

D. Alcantara, 88

DOLORES D. ALCANTARA, DIED ON Monday at the age of 88. She is survived by husband Fluving; children Fred, Daisy, Soccro and Eric; children-in-law Alice, Wally, Helen and Yvonne; and grandchildren Carla, Dawn, Clara, Kenn, Arnold, Ian, Joseph, Yvonn, Nikki, Charle and Nik.

Her body lies at the Sta. Maria Dela Serada Parish church on Kalayaan Avenue, Quezon City. Interment will be tomorrow at the Heritage Memorial Park in Taguig after the 9 a.m. funeral mass at the Sta. Maria Dela Serada parish church.

Labor dep't not keen on having PRC under its wings

By Jeremie Arting

SOME OFFICIALS OF THE Department of Labor and Employment are not exactly happy over President Macapagal Arroyo's executive order attaching the Professional Regulation Commission to the DOLE.

"The professional boards under the PRC are very sensitive of their independence. We wonder how much control we would have over them, and whether those boards would even allow us to look into their processes," said a senior labor official who asked not to be identified because he was not authorized to speak with reporters.

"But the transfer is already there, so we cannot do anything about it any more," the source said in the course of expressing his and other officials' doubts on whether Malacañang had thoroughly studied the implications of such a transfer.

The source pointed out that most of the 41 boards under the PRC—such as the Supervised Board of Nursing—were set up by law and were virtually operating as autonomous bodies to protect their integrity in exam-givers and their independence in deciding administrative cases involving professional malpractices.

The PRC has a bigger bureaucracy compared to other DOLE-attached agencies such as the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, the source said.

(The other agencies attached to the labor department are the Employees' Compensation Commission, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, Occupational Safety and Health Center and National Wages and Productivity Commission.)

Only a labor undersecretary working full time as PRC supervisor will be needed, the source said in reference to the appointment the department whereby under secretaries and assistant secretaries are assigned as "overseers" of one or more DOLE-bureaucrat agencies.

The source wondered who had made the decision to transfer the PRC from the Office of the President to the DOLE. He said the PRC would be better off under the Commission on Higher Education because "the premise of a profession is closely related to education."

According to the source, the issue of the transfer of the PRC should have been separate from the controversy involving the wiretaps of top executives in the running board examinations.

GMA orders retake of nursing exams

From page A1

everything so early the test where there was leakage, or whether it will be only for those who may have taken advantage of the review center where they had registered, all these details will be discussed by Bro. and the PRC," Ermita told reporters at his weekly briefing in Malacañang.

According to Ermita, Ms Arroyo decided on a retake of the exams at a meeting with members of the Cabinet on Tuesday.

Investigations

"The President made the decision and agreed with the majority of those who said, 'No, let's allow the retake, but leave the details to Secretary Patlan,'" he said.

The leakage of test questions for the nursing board exams is now being looked into not only by the National Bureau of Investigation but also by the Senate and the House.

The NBI has recommended the filing of charges against two members of the Board of Nursing whose test manuscripts had been leaked.

PRC Chair Leonor Tripon-Rosero had earlier said there would be no retake despite the leakage.

She subsequently told a senate hearing inquiry into the leakage that the decision rests in Arroyo's hands and to administrative authorities the exam passers was final.

Sen. Richard Gordon and other senators have been pushing for a retake, saying the leakage had compromised the integrity of the test.

Ms Arroyo had previously asked administrators to the effect that she wanted the quality to be preserved and the measures to be applied, suggesting that a retake was possible.

Yesterday following a Senate budget hearing, Patlan told reporters that the PRC decision against a retake of the exam would still change.

He said the matter would be among the talking points at the planned meeting with PRC officials today.

Ermita quoted a Cabinet member who had just arrived from the United States as saying that according to the Philippine Nurses Association is that economy the exportation of nurses there had been somehow affected by the controversy.

"There are the reasons that led us to decision to go ahead and reconsider the danger of our nurses, Ermita said.

Among those who took part in the discussion were Patlan, Education Secretary Emil Lopez, Trade Sec. Ma Lim Commission on Information Secretary Ignacio and Trade Secretary Peter Favila.

Ermita said the "consensus" of those present was that a retake was "the best thing to do."

Direction, coordination

It was the leakage controversy that prompted the President to issue Executive Order No. 566 "at, reforming the PRC to the DOLE for greater direction, total coordination," Ermita said.

He said Ms Arroyo signed the EO on Sept. 13 but it was only released the other day.

He added that Bristol's meeting today with PRC officials was also intended to "discuss the parameters of their relationship."

Bristol also told the Senate about the executive order placing the PRC under the jurisdiction of the labor department.

Sen. Franklin Drilon, chair of the Senate finance committee, said that it was the first time he and his colleagues had heard of Ms Arroyo's order, and that even labor officials had been caught by surprise.

"They (labor officials) are not so confident that they are equipped to handle such a huge bureaucracy joining the DOLE family," Drilon said. With a report from Ador Lubag and Jeremie Arting

Cha-cha bid's fate rests on 5 areas

From page A1

Antonino, who wrote one of the opposing petitions that the 5 percent was the most to legislate the size of financial limits, there desires to Davao and not to Bukas.

But in a press briefing yesterday, Senate spokesperson Raul Lambino, said he and his colleagues were "not sure" of having met the 5 percent requirement.

"We believe, as our documents would show, that we substantially and subsequently complied with the requirements of the Comelec case and Republic Act No. 6735. We are certain of that," he said.

Tañada claimed to have gathered nine million signatures, of which 6.3 million had been verified by the city and municipal registrars of the Comelec.

Lambino said Tañada had met the minimum 3 percent requirement in the 221 legislative districts nationwide, as provided for in Section 2, Article 17 of the Constitution.

The fate of Charter change, however, hinges on the Supreme Court's decision on five cases filed

Airlines prepare for transfer to Naia 3

By Nikko Dizon

HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL FOR THE international airlines operating out of the country's premier international airport.

The airlines have included in their planned budgets for 2005 their possible transfer to the modern but underbuilt Ninoy Aquino International Airport's Terminal 3—as they have been doing for the past four years, investor sources said yesterday.

"The airlines always hope for the best, that's why we always include Naia 3 in our budget," one airline official said.

There are about 30 airlines operating out of Naia 1, the same clients that the Manila International Airport Authority would most likely have if and when Naia 3 finally opens.

After much legal wrangling, the government last month paid P3.2 billion in initial payment to the Philippine International Air Terminals Corp. (Piatco), the consortium that built the Naia 3, which proved the way for the issuance of a writ of possession to the government.

With the writ in hand, the government hopes to make the Naia 3 operational soon.

Airline executives have said they would not transfer to Naia 3 because the old international terminal has become congested with the growing number of air travelers.

Every year since 2002, when the Naia 3 was first expected to be ready to open, the airlines had a combined fee, composed of an estimated half a billion pesos for their transfer to the new airport facility, the Airport Operators Council (AOC) said.

Each airline's budget would include provisions for furnishings for the office space at the new terminal and, sometimes, communication facilities, equipment and other items it would need to comply with the minimum operational requirements.

And when the airport terminal's opening was postponed, the budgets reverted back to the airlines' headquarters. But the airlines have since then always included the Naia 3 transfer in their yearly budget proposals, the source said.

"We abide by what's required of us. We make preparations for our possible transfer and the preparations always start with the budget," the source said.

One airline earmarked P56 million for its passenger lounge alone, while another allotted P18 million for its office space in the area unrented.

"It's very necessary to do the budget. Everything must be itemized to the last detail," the source said.

It is such a tedious process that most airline headquarter offices "would not touch it and deliberate on it until they are sure that the Naia 3 would really open."

"We justify our budget by telling our headquarters that there might be a possibility that a [Naia 3] will open," the source said.

But other their bosses would ask, jokingly: "What year?"

Fraport case won't affect Naia 3 opening—Palace

THE PLANNED OPENING OF THE NINOY Aquino International Airport Terminal 3 will not be affected by the National Bureau of Investigation's move to file charges against Fraport AG, the German partner of the manager-operator of the terminal, for violating the Anti-Dummy law, according to a top Malacañang official.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita also said he did not think there was any love of goodwill between the government and the Philippine International Air Terminals Co. (Piatco) executives as a result of the case against Fraport.

"I don't think there could be any loss of goodwill because in the first place the NBI investigation on the violation of the anti-dummy law is separate and distinct from the issues in the opening of the international airport," Ermita said in reporters.

He said the NBI had been investigating Fraport for the violation.

"So I don't see why it could have any effect in the opening of the airport. There are two separate cases," Ermita said. Christine O. Avendaño

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The Local Government Unit of General Santos City through the CY 2004 Trust Fund Budget intends to apply the sum of Two Million Seven Hundred Thousand Pesos (P2,700,000.00) for the approved Budget for the contract (ABC) to payments under the Services of Contractual Wage Farm Tractor. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at bid Opening.

The Local Government Unit of General Santos City now invites eligible bidders for the Purchase of 1 unit 4-Wheel New Farm Tractor. Delivery of the complete is required within 30 calendar days. The bidders are eligible bidders in accordance with the provisions of the Bidding Documents (7).

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pre-qualification process as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act" of the Philippines.

Bidders should have completed, within the last three (3) years from the date of submission and receipt of bids, a contract similar to the Project. The description of an equipment shall refer to the subject matter of the contract as stated in the Invitation to Bid, while similarity shall be determined by the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) of the Procuring Entity, based on the following criteria: (a) Agricultural Machinery; (b) Farm Tractor; (c) Farm Implements; (d) Farm Machinery; (e) Farm Equipment; (f) Farm Tools; (g) Farm Machinery and Equipment; (h) Farm Machinery and Tools; (i) Farm Machinery and Implements; (j) Farm Machinery and Equipment and Tools; (k) Farm Machinery and Implements and Tools; (l) Farm Machinery and Equipment and Implements; (m) Farm Machinery and Equipment and Implements and Tools; (n) Farm Machinery and Equipment and Implements and Tools; (o) Farm Machinery and Equipment and Implements and Tools; (p) Farm Machinery and Equipment and Implements and Tools; (q) Farm Machinery and Equipment and Implements and Tools; (r) Farm Machinery and Equipment and Implements and Tools; (s) Farm Machinery and Equipment and Implements and Tools; (t) Farm Machinery and Equipment and Implements and Tools; (u) Farm Machinery and Equipment and Implements and Tools; (v) Farm Machinery and Equipment and Implements and Tools; (w) Farm Machinery and Equipment and Implements and Tools; (x) Farm Machinery and Equipment and Implements and Tools; (y) Farm Machinery and Equipment and Implements and Tools; (z) Farm Machinery and Equipment and Implements and Tools.

A complete list of Bidding Documents may be purchased by bidders who passed the eligibility check upon the presentation of the Bidder's Registration No. (BIR) Certificate, to the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P1,000.00 to the City Treasurer's Office. The Bidding Documents shall be available for purchase starting on the date of publication of this Invitation.

The Local Government Unit of General Santos City now invites Bids from eligible bidders for the Purchase of 1 unit 4-Wheel New Farm Tractor. Delivery of the complete is required within 30 calendar days. The bidders are eligible bidders in accordance with the provisions of the Bidding Documents (7).

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The Local Government Unit of General Santos City reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

(Sgd.) ANEL JOSEPH D. CHAVEZ
BAC Chairman

Gov't rejects MILF demand for bigger ARMM

MILF rebels raise their gun while in formation at their headquarters in Camp Darapanan in Sultan Kudarat province on Monday. AFP

From page A1

"If the government insists to officially and treat the peace talks as a mere consultation/agency tool, what can Iqbal Mamlin Pangkoni if their choices other means to continue their legitimate struggle for freedom and self-determination?" Murad said in a statement last week.

"The government must take responsibility for the breakdown of the talks," he added.

'Conditional offer' unacceptable

During talks held Sept. 6-7 in Kuala Lumpur, rebel negotiators rejected a government offer to include some areas in the Christian on condition that they are subject to constitutional processes.

Murad said the "conditional offer" was underlining that "no real involvement any group worthy of its name can accept."

He rejected the government's position that "everything must be tailored fit to the Constitution."

Deniza, however, said adhering to the Constitution was "nonnegotiable."

"The bottom line is we cannot do anything outside the (1987) Constitution," he said. "We have to find out how the peace process will progress."

'Nobody can scare the gov't'

Asked whether the government is prepared to go back to war if the talks collapse, Deniza said: "Let's put it this way. Nobody can scare the government of anything. We are the government. We have the armed forces, we have the armed services, we have the police. But we will do everything to move on with our peace process."

Deniza expressed confidence no hostilities will break as three-year ceasefire, especially with an international monitoring team observing the truce.

"We are confident that the ceasefire will hold. There will be no fighting. The talks will move on," he said. AP

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'Milenyo' heads for Me

From page A1

Power interruptions hit Albay and Sorsogon yesterday.

In Western Samar, Catarman has suffered power outages since Sunday night because the typhoon toppled several power poles, Gov. Reid Ong said in the province.

"Power outages in the provinces are also suspected to have some power problems," Ong, reached on his mobile phone, said.

A Pagasa bulletin issued at 5 p.m. yesterday said Signal No. 3 (100 to 185 kph) was in effect over Batangas, Cavite, Laguna, Rizal, Metro Manila, Quezon, Pueblo Island, Marinduque, Masbate, Ticao Island and Burias provinces.

Signal No. 2 (60 to 100 kph) was in effect over Bulacan, the rest of Quezon, Batangas, Laguna, Rizal, Oriental Mindoro, Lubang and Mindoro Island.

Pagasa raised Signal No. 1 (30 to 60 kph) over Metro Manila, Occidental Mindoro, Cavite, Bataan, Pampanga, Nueva Ecija and Aurora (possibly afternoon and warned of flash floods in low-lying areas. Signal No. 1 was also in effect in Southern Leyte, Camiguin Island, Northern Cebu, Northern Iloilo, Northern Antique, Aklan and Capiz.

Some low-lying areas in Quezon were flooded due to heavy rains. Pagasa recorded 72 millimeters of rainfall in Tayabas and 128 mm in Casiguran, Aurora, much higher than the average rainfall in the province.

Some areas in Cebu City and Mactan got worst, both in Leyte, have also experienced flooding, according to Roy Cimon, administration officer of the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) in Tacloban.

Metro Manila Council Bet Emmanuel Rivor to remind Antique on overflow, flooding half of the coastal towns of Barbaza.

Stranded passengers

Close to 1,000 passengers bound for Leyte and Mindanao were stranded yesterday as ferry services in Eastern Visayas

Quezon said that as of noon yesterday more than 80 vehicles carrying passengers were stranded at the Matnog Port in Bicol region and Allen, Northern Samar, and Juan, Southern Leyte.

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) said 61 passengers and cargo vessels, 16 motorbancas and 1 pumpboat were also stranded in the Central Visayas region.

Inside Cebu, social welfare officer Eufemia Vicarpio said her office, together with the local government of Allen, would provide the stranded passengers with ready-to-eat food and drinking water.

Cebu's coast guard would also help in the rescue operations in the Liloan area.

Stranded in Bicol ports

The Office of Civil Defense (OCD) Bicol said nearly 2,500 passengers were stranded in other provinces in the region.

Matnog port had the biggest number of stranded people with 1,2745, followed by Pilar port, 2326; Talisoy, 2645; Bulan Port, 611; Pilar port, 207; Bulan, 1,000; Matnog, Camarines Sur, 116, and virtually all ports in the region.

The OCD also reported that at least 40 buses, 70 trucks, 66 cars, 10 motorcycles and eight motor launches stranded in the region.

But based on the report of the Coast Guard, 23,961 passengers were stranded in Matnog port, 270 in Pilar and 1,000 in Allen. There were also 61 buses, 62 trucks, 10 cars stranded in Matnog port.

Coast Guard guidelines

Vessels weighing 2,000 gross tons and below are banned from sailing in areas where public storm warning Signal No. 2 is in effect.

Sea areas under Signal No. 1 for vessels weighing 1,000 gross tonnage or

Sun lights up Zambo villa

From page A1

Solar panels have been put up beside the nipa house lining the 200 yards of the barangay providing 150 hours of electricity that lasts nearly 8 to 10 hours of battery.

Barangay Mercedes, home to over 300 rubber and cocoa farmers, is one of six sitios in the province that have benefited from the Solar Power Technology Support Project (SPOT) for agrarian reform communities (ARCs).

The P1.7 billion SPOT is funded by the Spanish government seeks to reduce rural poverty in the noncategorized and off-grid ARCs through solar electrification, rural economic development and institutional strengthening.

The SPOT is implemented jointly by the Department of Agrarian Reform and the Department of Energy in five regions, covering 45,000 agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs).

"Now, people don't have to travel 9 km to the poblacion just to buy candles and kerosene for their lamps," said the DAR agrarian reform program officer, citing media briefing by the office of Interim Mayor Cooperative owner, which now boasts of its own computers, batteries, water dispenser and other electrical appliances.

By said farmers, which used to be suspended on some days because of the insufficient rainfall light in classrooms, could now proceed past 5:30 p.m. and students would do their homework at home even at night.

Improved teaching methods

The solar electrification of barangay Mercedes and other sitios have led to increased services hour in schools and improved teaching methods through the use of television and DVD players, he said.

It has also reduced the prevalence of early vision problems among the children as they do not longer have to strain their reading with minimum lighting. Their parents, meanwhile, are able to devote

what used to be travel time to farmwork or livelihood.

The project has posted the vast scenic terrains in public halls which are also engaged in rice milling or barbecue stalls, another livelihood ever and making as additional livelihood. It has also non-economic activities like training and seminars for women.

The SPOTs has provided light bulbs, 16 schools, 14 barangay health stations in 13 barangay health centers in the sole municipality of Zamboanguita, Negros.

Biggest NPA front

The province used to be a hotbed of communist guerrilla activities. The People's army which really were the biggest front in the 1980s to the 1990s.

About 50 percent of the then 3,000 have been awarded lands under the comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) in the province are former members, according to provincial coordinator Regalio Bellen.

Many of them, like the farmers in municipality of Jose Rizal, Zamboanga, the province bordering, have moved on to develop their lands and have become productive to communities, Bellen said.

Rebel returnees

The Iligan ARC in Jose Dalman, Zamboanga, are rebel returnees who started supporting returnees to the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) through a memorandum of agreement signed in April last year.

The farmers have until 90,000 to 100,000 by next year. The only area in April said are expecting to get 100,000 by next year. The only problem is the farmers' cooperative is being run by the wife of the rebel returnees, said Ben Hernandez, NPA rebels' leader and developer.

"I like living here; it's been

Menthol cigarettes give stronger hit but deadlier

Homepage #1
blacks in the United States suffer disproportionately from smoking-related cardiovascular...

For a variety of historical and cultural reasons, including targeted advertising, about 70 percent of black smokers smoke menthol cigarettes such as Kool or Newport compared to about 30 percent of white smokers, according to the study published in the Archives of Internal Medicine.

This, combined with the difficulty in kicking the menthol cigarette habit, could help explain why blacks in the United States have higher rates of tobacco-related diseases and other smoking-related illnesses even though they generally smoke less, the study said.

The study, which looked at the smoking habits of 1,116 people over 35 years, did not determine why menthol cigarettes were harder to kick than regular tobacco cigarettes, said Dr. Mitch Fleischer of the University of California, San Francisco, the lead author of the study.

"Beyond the obvious, that they're sort of more pleasant to smoke, there is some evidence that it [menthol] inhibits the metabolization of nicotine, the addictive component," he said in an interview.

"So if [menthol] will last longer, it's not just a bigger hit and a longer-lasting hit when you have menthol, though that is still speculation."

Shishkin "was astonished with a lower likelihood of trying to quit in the first place," the study said.

It added that menthol smokers, if they did quit, were almost twice as likely to relapse when trying to stop and also smoked fewer cigarettes per day for a sustained period of time.

Fleischer's study of 800 smokers and 316 men found that 68 percent of those who smoked menthol cigarettes in 1980 were still smoking at follow-up examinations in 2000 compared to 56 percent of smokers who bought regular cigarettes.

The study said it found no evidence that peppermint oil layered menthol itself made such cigarettes more dangerous.

"Stretched and unstretched cigarettes seem to be equally harmful per cigarette smoked" in terms of heart disease and diseases in lung function, the study concluded.

dancers.

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...ba a Wednesday visit to the Bagle Shipyard at the Subic ...ar artist's rendition of the shipyard project. ...ERS

...etro; no classes

...are not allowed to leave the post.

The travel ban on search of certain people is being implemented in accordance with a Philippine Coast Guard memorandum issued at the Guidelines on Movement Vessels During Heavy Weather.

Meteorologist Gil Cruz expected storm to enter the Philippines since the weather forecasters announced last week that developing storm of 11 miles, a phenomenon marking anomalies in sea surface temperature of the equatorial Pacific region affecting the Philippines.

Mayon Volcano

Seismologists said the storm of lahar from Mayon Volcano due to continuous rains brought about by Mayon was to...

Alex Baldoz, senior science research specialist at the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs), said there was no lahar or mudflow flood due to the absence of pyroclastic flow in...

In its bulletin yesterday, the Phivolcs recorded seven volcanic earthquakes, including continuous storms of magma in the crater, and 18 minute episodes, caused by lava and 1,500 to 1,700 meters on the slopes of the volcano.

Phivolcs said Mayon remained at a high level of unrest with full probability for explosive eruptions.

The extended danger zone in the southeast sector, 7 km from the center, and the 6-km radius permanent danger zone remained off-limits to people.

Mayon, a popular tourist destination, last threw up flaming lava, rock, huge rocks, and noxious gas since July. Reporters from Leila B. Salaverria in Manila; Jocelyn Lee Bakker, with reports from Bobby Q. Lanuban, Inquirer Southern Luzon; Fe...ance S. Lubio, Jessy a. Gallaste and Jhunnex Napallacan, and Carrie P. Grenas, Inquirer Visayas; and Reuters

...age even at night

leave the firehouse in mere seconds," Yonkers Dispatcher Sebastian Bubbo during an interview with the NAOMI H. ARIEL, Editorial, another SPOTS site.

Dispatcher was a finance officer of the 60th's in the 1980's in the country (BBC) Command operating in Guttenberg-Jail Notts. She was with the 60th from 1984 until the military resident in camp and assisted law and order tasks in 2001.

After being detained for three months in Pilsen, she returned to her family in Bonn, thanks to some policy interventions, but was left for the nonpermanence of ...ministries Commission for Peace and Development and left to Jane Bahnsen, where she is now finance officer of the Sigmund Bernets Multi-Purpose Cooperative.

"I believe in the communist propaganda, the one there will be egalitarian reform and we would have our lands," Ortigas recalled. She and her husband Jimmy, also a former MPs rebel, now own a 1.10-hectare hectic near Bahnsen planted to coconut, corn and rice, cassava.

Land redistribution

The Ortigas have found other ex-MPs rebels like Judy Carding in the municipality. After being an organizer for the 70th BBC Command for seven years, Carding has returned to his town, peacefully managing the 15 hectare farm owned by his Uncle a model family.

"Luckily for us, there is not much resistance on land distribution from landlords," Ortigas said. "We have distributed 15,000 hectares of land, over the target 52,000 hectares," the bulletin said.

The DAR in Zamboanga has found an additional 126,000 ha of agricultural land that can be covered by CARP but this has yet to be validated, according to the bulletin.

The SPOTS is now on its second phase, which will distribute an estimated 55,000 households in 13 provinces in Mindanao.

Bayer Marks 5 Years of BYEE

Five years since the Bayer Young Environmental Envoy (BYEE) Program was launched in the Philippines, the 87-strong network of youth environmental leaders is making its presence increasingly felt. Its alumni club has been selected as the national focal point of the UNEP Southeast Asia Youth Environment Network.

Distinguished Alumni

At the recent Tunza World Youth Conference held by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Bangalore, India, Bayer Young Environmental Envoy Reinier Tinapay had the distinct honor of being elected to the highest position in the UNEP Tunza Youth Advisory Council for Asia and the Pacific. In his position, Reinier represents close ties with youth groups all over Asia and the Pacific, and represents the concerns of his youth constituents in all UNEP forums. He was part of a 7-youth delegation sent to the 5th Global Civil Society Forum (GCSF) and the 9th Global Ministerial Assembly held in Dubai.

An officer of the Watershed Management Youth Council of Davao, he and his organization once exposed an illegal plantation inside a Mindanao nature reserve, which eventually led to the closure of the plantation following legal proceedings. His story landed in over five German papers, including the important regional newspaper Mannheimer Morgen. "All these achievements would not have been possible if not for the Bayer Young Environmental Envoy program and through God's grace," Reinier said gratefully.

Within the BYEE ranks is a young inventor, Ronar Lisanta, who co-invented a unique technology that converts the industrial solid wastes of sugar mills and refinery plants into cement. Following seven years of research, Lisanta succeeded to file his patent application and is close to bringing his invention to a commercial level. "The BYEE has connected me to people who have the capacity to help me implement my invention and put the technology to good use," Lisanta said. He continues to demonstrate his passion for the environment in his current work as Executive Assistant to Atty. Antonio Oposa, a leading environmental lawyer.

Janice Lee recently completed her MSC in Environmental Change and Management under a full scholarship at the University of Oxford. "Many opportunities opened up to me since I became a Bayer Young Environmental Envoy. I was exposed to the best environmental practices of Bayer in Germany during the study tour and saw firsthand the steps that a specific industry took on addressing their environmental impacts and concerns." Today she works for Environmental Resources Management in Hong Kong, advising clients on the environmental and social risks of their investments and assisting private corporations to be sustainable enterprises.

Bayer-UNEP Partnership

As part of its corporate social responsibility, Bayer is a proud partner of UNEP in its global youth activities. In 2004, an agreement was signed by the heads of UNEP and Bayer, Professor Klaus Toepfer and Mr. Werner Wenning, making Bayer the first private sector partner of UNEP in the area of youth and the environment.

It was back in the mid-1990s when UNEP and Bayer began working together on projects involving youth and the environment, primarily in the Asia-Pacific region. "The partnership's focus on young people is borne out of a conscious decision. We are convinced that we have to involve committed young people in environmental issues because they will be the ones to make the important decisions of tomorrow regarding the development of our planet," said Jean Brosz, Managing Director of Bayer Philippines. "Together we want to help raise the environmental awareness of young people all over the world and support them in their commitment to sustainable development."

Bayer supports UNEP with a funding of EUR 1 Million per year for about a dozen environmental projects for young people around the globe. The company has integrated its own projects and activities into the joint program. At the heart of the partnership is the Bayer Young Environmental Envoy Program, where outstanding youth from 16 countries around the world get to visit Germany for a weeklong environmental study tour.

2006 Bayer Young Environmental Envoys honored tonight

Tonight, 13 young men and women will be recognized for their creativity and work in sustainable development and environmental protection. Selected in a nationwide search, these young envoys, coming from various fields—engineering, law, communications, management, forestry—share a love and passion for the environment.

Four of these 13 young people will be selected to go on an environmental study tour of Germany.

Bayer Young Environmental Envoy

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Cheap

SWATTING A MOSQUITO CAN BE AN ACT OF self-defense, especially in these times when a dengue epidemic threatens. So is taming down a fly which can convey so many diseases. But there's no need at least a similar justification for taking the life of another human being? To some people, like Francisco Gerona, the answer apparently is "yes."

EDITORIAL

Patrick Vincent Bonds was only 5 years old when he first climbed the National Power Corp. transmission tower near their home in Barangay Gayaqayaq, San Jose del Monte City in Bulacan, according to their neighbors. Performing this dangerous balancing act was just one manifestation of his undaunted mind, his mother said. He did it a few more times over the years, but always managing somehow or come down safely every time. On a fine Saturday, when he did it one more time and landed dead on the ground.

Bonds, who was 12, climbed the tower at around 11 that morning and neighbors quickly rushed to witness his high-wire act. At times, he would just sit on a steel beam, but sometimes he would walk, prance or dance, to the amusement and anxiety of the crowd below. His mother and others pleaded with him to come down. He ignored them.

Around 2 p.m., Gerona, a barangay council member, thought he had seen enough. He went behind a van, took out a gun and fired three times at the boy. Like a wounded bird, Bonds hung on to a beam, but ever so slowly as in a suspense movie, he lost his grip and fell from the tower—all in full view of the crowd and a television crew.

Gerona may kill in self-defense under our laws. But surely, the boy who was evidently not of sound mind if of sound body posed no immediate danger to the 62-year-old barangay official. At least not where he was, perched 150 feet above the ground. So why did Gerona see him to target practice?

He had a one-word explanation for his action: "Pesteng." "One boy was a pest, and so the village official, that made him hear from a mosquito or a fly.

But much on the young boy's child-elevated murder shocks and revolts, it hardly surprises anymore. It's just another example of how cheap human life has become in these parts. Sometimes, it takes only the slightest provocation—like singing somebody else's favorite song—for murder and mayhem to happen. Sometimes, it is fatal to be merely a member of an organization that may be legal but deemed dangerous enough by government officials and their agents, like so many leftist organizations. And sometimes, murder requires no reason at all, like the public execution carried out by Gerona last Saturday.

What could Gerona have been thinking when he pulled the trigger? He must be a great fan of newly retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan, who left a trail of death among leftist activists wherever he was assigned, from Mindoro to Eastern Visayas and finally General Luna. For what's the difference between killing one innocent child and dozens of innocent civilians who just happen not to share one's political views? Palparan's grim record earned the lone high praise from President Macapagal-Arroyo as well as a promise of appointment to a senior government position as compensation.

If Palparan gets his reward, Gerona ought to be considered for a higher position, too. He would be perfect as chief of security of the University of the Philippines, where there are plenty of passersby. Like students who lead marches against the Arroyo administration. Or activists who pelt top military officials with raw eggs. Or fraternity members who run naked around campus. Gerona might even get Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez to write him a letter of recommendation.

Feel those wallets?

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

DAVAO CITY—"A FULL POCKETBOOK ENSURES more family than an empty stomach," Franklin Drilon fervently once said. And FDR's counsel succeeds in what the "Population Growth Strategy Versus Riskwar from the Philippines" study calls: How does this affect the welfare of food growing areas?

The just-published Asia Pacific Policy Center (APPC) analysis devotes its second section to the crux: "Population Growth had Increased—Implications on Poverty and Expenditures of Food Consumer Basis."

LGUs fill the "driver's seat" under the Local Government Code, note APPC's Rosemarie Edillon and Carlos Head Santos. Nonetheless decisions in the 80 provinces, 117 cities and 42,044 barangays, increasingly depend on local officials.

If this country reared its "demographic transition," how would the reduced population trends close 1.02 billion cheats?

Modern medicine and education supposedly drop the birth rate. Death rates "have tended to show balance in diverse population growth. Economic development is the "demographic transition."

Japan has completed this route. It is surging in Indonesia and Vietnam. But, on Jan. 6 last year, Drilon said: "In 1948, Philippine population became constitution by Edillon and Abad Santos focus on how population affects politically volatile issues which LGUs are allergic to pedaling. They examine Internal Revenue Allotments (IRA) and Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) and Social Services and shortfalls down government coffers.

The study built on two previous analyses: (1) a 2004 comparison of Philippine and Thailand poverty incidences, given Thai's different population paths, and (2) the 2000 analysis of how large proportions of youngsters affect income in 74 provinces.

Between 1975 and 2000, Thailand's annual food demand grew from 30 million to 63.1 million, from 41 million. Without a transition, the Philippines' population doubled. Even 43 million to 81.4 million. Today it exceeds 86.3 million—and is still growing.

Established truth a large "bulge" of dependents, Filipino incomes grew only by 2.6 times—"reduction even when compared to Thailand's eight times," noted Economy of the Philippines' Bautista Magno.

What if the Philippines had followed Thailand's population growth path? Then, 6.03 billion Filipinos would have broken free of the poverty treadmill and attained the poverty-level target down to 17.6 million. And 2.81 million individuals would have been better off by now.

"Young population workers," the study reports, "had contrary to the cliché, more is not necessarily merrier." In fact, taking a provincial point from the number of dependents parks in government income from 9.07.440 to 9.29.063. "This would mean an increase of 8 percent to national average per capita income," the study reports.

Mindoro remains formidable battles. Kidlat and Abad Santos admit. An IRA sketch makes for a full pocketbook, as PDP's Senator Drilon put it. It would expand income even in homes of quality of life improvement—they are quickly rich. "There seems to be little incentive for LGUs to prioritize resources for population management."

The study's detailed computations and conclusions will be presented to LGU executives in Baguio, Iloilo and Zamboanga seminars, organized by the Philippine Center for Investment and Population. Specific will fly in their back for a realistic "review of the findings."

• "All provinces will require positive net gains in net lower population and per capita incomes. Metro Manila's only exception. Or consumption will ring in 39.23 billion more and Negros Occidental 91.39 billion.

Other top gainers would be Laguna, Cebu, Pangasinan, Batangas, Palawan, Isabela, Misamis Oriental and Negros Oriental.

• "Changes from a demographic transition would see revenues and basic in that allotments. Ten provinces that had been dependency would reap a windfall. Those with the heaviest dependency burdens stand to lose anywhere from six to 8.2 percent.

• "Total savings in GDP expenses could increase around 22 percent that would lose in Bicol population declined. "Excluding Tawi-Tawi, the provinces would be able to generate an average per economy benefit of P311 million."

• Higher per capita incomes, stemming from a slowdown in population increases, would result in higher LGU incomes. This would enhance badly needed delivery of social services.

There are two channels through which population can improve per capita income. One is the flow of people. Increase per capita income ("Take a bigger pie") and increase government revenues for redistribution ("make the pie slices fatter").

By December, LGUs can independently analyze available to the base on the "Strategy of Riskwar" from the Philippines and still be neutral of self benefits. "There's no need for individual provinces to adopt a neutral and are attitude . . . Both managers can create pie or enhance."

"Pie slices can be fatter [or] don't need any large as a matter of course," the study says. It must be stated: "And the experience of other countries shows that once the second phase of a demographic transition begins, its benefits can last, at least, a century . . . But we have to begin."

Means can be debated, the study says. But all can agree that are need to ensure that first big push to get out of the vicious circle. And this is, unchecked population climbing development and a surging poverty resistant rate.

* * *

E-mail: juan_mercado@pdp.ph.net.ph

Footnote to regression

THERE'S THE RUB

Gerardo de Quiroz

IT JUST SO HAPPENS THAT THE PHILIPPINES HAVE ASKED HIS STAFF I think of the force involving via Pope. There seems to exist going by the subject after all.

Mona Siddiqui, the director of the Centre for the Study of Islam in Glasgow University reflects some very good insights about it, which I quote fully. She is not opening in his defense of fellow Muslims. "As offended I remain perplexed. Why are Muslims magnifying every incident to the level of a global conflict? Administrated manipulation of the Prophet may be laudable questions but ... the real evils which manifest themselves in Israel and threats directed are symptoms of a community not only feeling under siege but deeply resenting its then victim status."

But he is interpreting in his criticisms of the Pope as well. "To state that Prophet Mohammed did not deliberately intend to offend the Prophet is particular. But as someone who was previously the head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, he is not naïve and must have known that his speech would be received and interpreted in the world of more pretentious ... This incident is not about defending freedom of speech ... it is about recognizing that pitting one faith against another to show the superiority of one and the debasement of the other is a dangerous and reprehensible game. Both Christianity and Islam have blood on their hands."

He has very sage advice for people of his faith. "Muslims must learn that differing viewpoints and multiple voices are the very essence of civil society. Muslims must learn that they have no monopoly on moral high ground as the Prophet and his legacy empowers must be dignified and respected. This would reflect the true essence of Islam calling for tolerance and restitution as during 1400 more than pervading all those who might."

I agree with the sentiment. I respect will, give, but I am not a great fan of religions that create separate Church and State. There is an open invitation to intolerance. That runs the risk of the latter being used as a weapon against the one wrestling around the earth. Indeed, I am not a great fan of religions that create any difference in heaven and punish it harsh.

Yet I am not forget, Salman Rushdie still has a fatwa, or death sentence, hanging on his head for writing "The Satanic Verses," contempt of that modern-day caricature of a religious lessons, the Ayatollah Khomeini. Of course, Christians too have their share of transgressions—some better than the Scriptures, the Crusades, witch hunts, auto da-fes, Galileo, Jews by the Nazis, Pope Benedict and his support for Franco's bloody regime in Spain, the leading passage about Islam, coming from a 14th century Byzantine emperor, was meant to highlight the chasm that both and reason are not incompatible, or indeed that holy wars are not holy at all, they are incongruous that seek your faith. But surely even Popes must know that warning comes not just from the text itself, or from what is explicitly said, but from the context in which something is said. If you are an envoy, and you spend a few days in a country where a people who for thought nothing of butchering others, including their own, while heard was busy invading Lebanon, you would be a fool to complain that many are listening.

The Pope's supporters have said that, unfortunately the Pope is not a PR dynamo, he is a PR nightmare. But this is more than a PR problem. Benedict has not just the Pope, he is a Pope who has been at pains to resurrect Europe—and not quite incidentally halt the advance of Islam—by demonstrating the superiority of Christianity. He is a Pope who, in Salzburg recently, has lauded the Conquistadors for the liberation of Islam, which could quite incidentally, too, mean its return to the Inquisition. It was in that capacity that Benedict, then also Joseph Ratzinger, sought to reassert religious or ideological imperatives within the Catholic Church over pastoral ones and by repressing.

And if all that wasn't enough, Benedict's quote of a medieval pagan is, which comes very close to the Nazi's use of the term "Final Solution" to describe their plan for the extermination of Jews and Christianity do have blood on their hands. The threat of John Paul II's papacy were statements, or trying to bring out what was best in all religions. The thrust of Benedict's papacy, at least early, seems the opposite, which is precisely why he is the Pope of "reconquista," and which is the most urgent of Christianity itself, the reconquista of Islam of presumed heretics by a righteous people of it.

Completely ironically, the man who seems to identify in part John Paul II's frame of mind is Bill Clinton who, after handwaving Pope in an interview for his memoir book, later told BBC's "Meet the Press" that the biggest problem in the world today is "The illusion that our differences cannot exist that we cannot live together."

What can one say? Sometimes mediocre minds and ill-tempers do mind.

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Sanctions vs Nokor

THE JAPANESE GOVERNMENT HAS IMPOSED FINANCIAL sanctions against North Korea. The sanctions effectively ban 15 North Korean-related organizations and resulting from or entities on individuals from transacting funds overseas.

The measure was decided in line with a UN Security Council resolution unanimously adopted on July 15, condemning North Korea's test-firing of missiles on July 5. Although more than two months have passed since the adoption of the resolution, North Korea has been ignoring it. Imposing sanctions was the right course of action for the government to take.

FOREIGN COMMENT

International cooperation is necessary to maximize the effects of the sanctions.

China and South Korea, which have the greatest trade with North Korea than Japan or Australia, should impose similar measures to see the largest possible effect of the sanctions. — Yomiuri Shimbun (Tokyo)

Enlightening exchange

THE HARSHNESS OF ORAL ARGUMENTS FOR AND against people's initiative in the Supreme Court prompted a good Dominican friend to quip: 11 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 28. Both sides claimed some minority bias it was the exchanges between counsels and justices in those 10 hours that were more enlightening and revealing. I confess to having been dumbfounded by many questions Justice Angelina Sandoval-Gutierrez, whom former President Joseph Estrada appointed to the Supreme Court in 2000, threw to Solicitor General Alfredo Benipayo. Is there no conflict between solicitor general and presiding justice of the Supreme Court? Is Benipayo supposed to be neutral? Isn't he duty-bound to defend the people's initiative? Isn't he supposed to be the people's lawyer?

But clearly Justice Sandoval-Gutierrez's clear resenting those arguments was not the job of Sandoval, as head of the Solicitor General's office, to represent the government in the Supreme Court. Nothing in the rules of court prohibits the solicitor general from representing the government's opponent in a case. Benipayo himself admitted in open court that he was representing the government's opponent in a case. Benipayo himself admitted in open court that he was representing the government's opponent in a case. Benipayo himself admitted in open court that he was representing the government's opponent in a case.

Justice Sandoval-Gutierrez's clear resenting those arguments was not the job of Sandoval, as head of the Solicitor General's office, to represent the government in the Supreme Court. Nothing in the rules of court prohibits the solicitor general from

No. 1 source of corruption

I AGREE WITH MR. PROFILO Lacsina...that pork barrel system is the country's no. 1 source of corruption among legislators." According to Lacsina, "A 'pork barrel,' is evil. It is a great source of graft that cuts across all levels of the legislative and executive branches of the government."

I am not exactly a Lacsina fan but I am with him in calling the public to condemn the pork barrel, the country's No. 1 source of graft and corruption. Our lawmakers have entered the amount of pork barrel from P120 million to P300 million for each

POPE Benedict is in dialogue with Muslim envoys.

Row over Pope's speech stresses need for inter-faith dialogue

IT'S MOST THAT THAT THE LEaderships of the Islamic faith came out with open manifestos in defense of Mohammed's version of the jihad.

Muslims denied that Pope Benedict XVI ignited words in "disputable." Precisely, now is the hour for Muslims not only to disclaim, condemn or demand an apology but, more so, to clarify the very practice that causes chaos and the world at large in much trouble and confusion.

Dethroned Christians and Muslims alike, reject by their faith, commit themselves to preach and to live what they preach. So, why do we find the likes of Saddam Hussein, Osama bin Laden, the late beyond numbers and the so-called suicide bombers, among others, lurking behind and roaming around? Should we ask our Muslim friends to apologize, also, for all the terror and destruction wrought by the misguided extremists in their midst? But are the dissenters mentioned above "misguided" really? If not, by what codes of standards should they be measured? Such bothersome questions remain unanswered.

While Christians, in all democratic nations, link violence and terrorism-killings to anything but faith, Muslims may have their own arguments, or may stand by the fi-

AMA clarifies erroneous claims

IN HIS SEPT. 19 COLUMN, COmelio Bunal suggested that AMA Computer College should immediately vacate its existing school facilities in view of the permit issued by the CHED on June 23, 2006. That permit supersedes the provisional permit issued on June 16, 2004. The existing school is now housed in the AMA Building located at 1000 Brgy. Bagumbayan, Quezon City. We decided to terminate our lease on the former location due to the construction of the MAA Building. The move allows us to accommodate 91,25 students, presently spread on monthly rental rates, for the graduate installation

Full, unabashed public display of tyrannic rule

I DEEPLY MOURNED THE HUmanity denials of the second impeachment case filed against President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo by learned members of country, alleged, though it was a rehash from the one filed last year.

I am not against the President as one cannot measure in pleasing the ship of state to a brighter tomorrow but the generations yet unborn/to-be are too late/bother, their President Gloria Macapagal did in the 2004/2005 era and the losers of his counterparts.

It was, however, plain hypocrisy for the House majority to dismiss the impeachment without giving the complainants [who were the people themselves, yet opposition congressmen] the opportunity to present evidence, it was tyranny of the majority in full, unabashed public display.

—EDUARDO G. PUZELLA SR., JP Rizal Street, Barangay Camachilihan, Sta., Camalaniugan Nueva Ecija

Petron guilty of skimping

HERE IS MY ANALOGY WHICH makes me believe why Petron is mainly responsible for the oil spill off Guimaras.

Suppose a wealthy woman in the final business name to transport some food to the next town. Wanting to save on transportation costs, she hires a poor, sickly man to take a heavy, huge pot of cooked food to the next town.

The poor man takes a public jeep for the near town. Being too weak to carry the pot properly, he spills the contents on the jeepney floor and on some passengers.

Who should take responsibility for denying the jeep and the passengers? The sick man who transported the food or the wealthy woman who hired the services of the sick man?

—NOLASCO'S, nolascos@mail.upd.edu.ph

Other ways to fight cervical cancer

DEAR MARIBEL DIMITCHCALIBAN, "How many women will have to die?" (PDI, 9/16/06) inaccurately narrates Cordasil, the cervical cancer (papilloma virus) vaccine, will save lives, it has not been proven to save lives, it does reduce infection from two common strains of papilloma virus, but eventually, with sexual contact, women may be infected with other strains.

Women still need Pap smears. Women should still refrain from multiple sex partners. Women are still at risk for other sexually transmitted infections like herpes and chlamydia. Women should still practice safe sex (papilloma virus comes and goes. Women should be campaigning to fortify foods with folic acid and vitamin C, which quell this virus. Those vitamins are found in fruits and vegetables via vaccine.

—BILL HARRIS, MD Stanford University Medical Center, San Ramon, California, USA, bharris@aol.com.

JPE deserves to be chair of human rights committee

FOR HOISTING AS MERE "HIStory adventurers", the soldiers who, along with now fun, mutinied the Oakwood hotel three to restore Philippine democracy in 1986, the staunch editorial of Sept. 18 interrupted the big role this paper played during People Power I.

If not for People Power I, during which the military assisted in rightful exit as possessor of the people, the Supreme may no longer be here today. It should be pointed out that Edsa II was successful because the military again served as a conduit of people power.

On the other hand, the failed attempts to ousted President Macapagal-Arroyo through Edsa Uno must actions only showed that the Philippines, at least...so people power would be successful without the military withdrawing support from an unpopular government.

Likewise, the editorial seemed to have confused cause and effect when it stated: "On Feb. 22, 1986, having arrive by threats input to the throne, to Cardio broke away from the Marcos regime."

Line no cross lessons. It must be said that the very reason that President Marcos summed to arrest Enrile was that the latter had broken away from his regime. It was not a still case of Enrile breaking away from Marcos because he was facing arrest. With that allegation, he ended a draft charged of Philippine history whatever role Enrile played in the intense years should now be limited since he has already redeemed himself three over. There should already be closure as far as his motive is concerned.

There is no sense to be vindictive and to be judgmental toward one who has given all his life to the service of this nation. In the Senate, Enrile is the epitome of a 24/7 guy—someone who opines and exists the Senate while many other lawmakers are nowhere to be found. Enrile has become the Senate's conscience. He is the one—rarely failing to attend hearings of committees that he chairs or he is a member of, and ever ready to assist with anyone during legislative deliberations.

I believe Enrile has the complete and unanimous of judgment to serve as chair of the human commission on human rights, or of any other committee, for that matter.

—ELIAS ARNE DE MESA, 12-H 18 Alhambra St., Santos 46, Better Living Subd., Paranaque City

Postpone Cha-cha

RECENT DEBATES AMID THE DIRECT INVOLVEments of opportunists in Charter change initiatives clearly justify the postponement of Cha-cha to some future date, after the 2007 election.

Rep. Teodoro Locsin Jr. of Makati petitioned a resumption and pardoner are values he publicly called the people's mistake and the proposed Constituent Assembly as an "FPJ Do Reason Productions" that is being undertaken with the consent and tolerance of the Arroyo administration. Locsin, together with many members of the opposition, condemned the railroading of Resolution No. 1260 by the House Committee on Constitutional Amendments. The resolution authorizes Congress or convention as a Constituent Assembly for the purpose of voting or amending the Constitution.

Rep. Rolex Golez tweeted the hasty approval of the resolution as irregular. The members of the committee were not given copies of the resolution, much less reasonable time to discuss and refuse on the very important resolution and its attached draft Constitution. Rep. Gloc Ideas of Cagayan, called the resolution a "Frankenstein Monster," because President Marked Villar agreed with Sen. Aiker Arroyo that the resolution is the "last ditch attempt to either postpone or cancel next year's elections."

Columnist Raul H. Esta suggested the postponement of Cha-cha because "The House dominantly approved the resolution to convene Congress as a Constituent Assembly—without the participation of the Senate—and change the Constitution. Everybody knows that this is unconstitutional, including congressmen many of whom are lawyers, but they brazenly went ahead and supported an unconstitutional proposal. This is clearly an abuse of their power." (PDI, 8/9/06)

In view of the partisan involvements of opportunists in the Cha-cha initiatives, and the proposition for the 2007 elections—any move to revise or amend our Constitution between now and up to the 2007 elections—will be subject of suspicion that it is motivated by a hidden and unfair political agenda.

In order to insulate Cha-cha from partisan politics, it is advisable to do it through the transparent, broadly participatory and last-direct Constitutional Convention.

—LEONCIO O. CADIENTE, Enlightenment Citizens Movement for a Federal Philippines, 44 Mission Hill, Fin., Lachao, Quezon City

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Across the NATION

100 GIs held at Zambo immigration

ZAMBOANGA CITY—AT LEAST 114 US SERVICEMEN from Guam were briefly held at the Zamboanga International Airport (ZIA) on Thursday afternoon after they failed to produce travel documents from the Bureau of Immigration and Deportation (BID).

Immigration officials, who requested anonymity, said the American servicemen arrived here from Guam aboard a Boeing 737, which was chartered from the North American Airlines, around 4 p.m.

"There are some sort of problem in their clearance papers. We were informed from an official from Guam appointed their clearance," the officer said.

Supt. Ivor Pedro, chief of the Intelligence Section, said the 114 servicemen were allowed to proceed to the military's Camp Aguinaldo Barracks in Barangay Mahayag here about three hours later.

The problem, he said, was also resolved.

Matthew Lauterbay, press attaché of the US Embassy in Manila, said the reasons the troops were sent here to participate in "annual exercises" of soldiers under the Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines (JSOTF).

"Normally they don't arrive by chartered flights. Most of the time, they are commercial flights," he said.

Lauterbay said the problem with the immigration department was only temporary and that the troops were later allowed entry to the Philippines.

Col. Antonio Gaguni, Task Force Zamboanga chief, said he did not know where the US servicemen will be deployed.

"It was not coordinated with me. I don't know anything about their arrangement," he said. Aniel S. Alfanta, Inquirer Mindanao

EDUCATION
Muslim students listen to English lessons by radio at the Bilangan Elementary School in Pagalungan, Maguindanao. The project is being carried out by a New York-based nonprofit organization and the Catholic school Notre Dame University.

Treasurer, 3 others face public fund theft raps

[illegible] SULTAN KUDARAT NORTH—Four auditors have recommended the filing of charges against the town treasurer here and the tax collectors after they were found to have failed to remit more than P6.3 million in government funds for a seven-month period beginning December last year.

The Commission on Audit also ordered municipal treasurer Evelyn Baldo and collection officers Maria Concepcion Manuel, Carmelita Marero and Jerome Zabala to refund the amount.

Ignacio Medrano, the audit team leader, conducted the investigation from July 3 to 31 this year and covered seven months beginning December last year to July this year.

Mayor Alfredo Valdez said a fact-finding committee he created would come out with a separate report on the cash shortfall.

Valdez said the committee was created because of reports that the amount of government funds missing could be bigger and more people would be involved in the shortfall.

"We suspected that there was more to it than [illegible] is uncover. This has been going on for years. There's a audit lapse. I'm treasurer's office [illegible]," he said.

Medrano, in his report, said the cash accountabilities of the employees were not final because payments of big cash disbursements pending in the town have not been reconciled with their records.

Based on the COA's findings, the cash accountabilities of the employees consisted of the following: Baldo (P5,574,111), Marero (P1,950,280), Manuel (P888,834) and Zabala (P6,595) or a total of P9,350,125.

Out of the cash shortages the employees have so far returned some P565,115. They have since been assigned to the provincial treasurer's office for a month after COA began its investigation.

The COA report said the amounts involved "were not turned over to the liquidating officers and remained in the hands of the collectors or spent by them for their personal needs."

The commission said every collector had an account or a cash book and they could have verified the status of remittance even without the corresponding actual remittance.

"Most of the receipts issued [by collectors] were not dated to conceal the actual dates of collection, bringing confusion as to the veracity of actual collections," the report said.

The COA also noted deceit in the employees' practice of cancelling the original copy of a receipt without cancelling the duplicate and triplicate copies and the issuance of receipts without using carbon papers.

"They make only on the original copy what is actually received and make a lesser amount [on the duplicate/triplicate copies] and pocket the difference," it added.

The commission asked the acting town treasurer to closely supervise collection officers and clerks and require them to submit their collections to the liquidating officers daily before the close of business hours.

It also asked the treasurer to deposit all collections with the authorized depository bank. Cresencia Arsenales, Inquirer Northern Luzon

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DENR continues fish cage demolition as deadline draws near

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT and Natural Resources continued to demolish illegal fish pens and fish cages in Laguna Lake as its deadline for the enforcers' demolition on Sept. 30 drew near.

In a statement, Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez also appealed to local authorities, police and agents of other national government agencies to be vigilant to prevent the re-emergence of illegal fishpens and fish cages in the lake.

The DENR, joint by with the Laguna Lake Development Authority, launched a campaign to rid Laguna Lake of illegal fish structures starting Sept. 1.

So far, the two agencies have dismantled 104 hectares of Laguna Lake from the illegal structures. Bayan had the drive in head of the National Anti-Environmental Crime Task Force (NAECTF).

Bayan said the illegal fish pens and fish cages were causing problems in the lake due to overfeeding of fish, threatening the survival of the fishing industry in the lake.

The illegal structures also drastically reduced the canal exits of fishermen, causing economic losses to them and their families. Fish pens occupy five hectares, while fish cages occupy just one hectare of lake water.

"We must not allow the resurgence of any pens or cages by demolishing illegal fish pens and cages to save the lake," Bayan said. "The demolition operations have not only enabled small fish, either to grow more fishing space, they have likewise contributed immensely in reducing pollution of the lake brought about by overstocking of fish and unsafe fish farming practices."

Environment Undersecretary Jose Kanchi, deputy NAECTF chief, said only 17 hectares are still occupied by fish structures.

A similar campaign is organized in Batangas where mayors are now drafting a common ordinance to regulate fish cage operations.

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Task Force on Protected Landscape Protected Area Management Board (TPPL-PAMB) and environmental non-government organizations Tanggol Kalikasan (TK) facilitated the ongoing ordinance consultation, which started last Thursday in Bian to Calauan town.

The unified ordinance likewise seeks to create zoning guidelines for fish cages and fish sanctuary areas, regulate use of fish gears and fishery and enforce other relative rules for the lake biological diversity conservation.

The PAMB expects to finish the ordinance by December.

Taal Lake, which has a total surface area of 24,356 hectares and an average depth of 60.45 meters, is the country's third largest lake—next to Laguna Lake and Lanao Lake.

It is surrounded by 11 cities and two cities in Batangas.

In 1996, the national government declared Taal Lake and Taal Volcano a protected area under the National Integrated Protected Areas System Law or Republic Act No. 7586 by virtue of Presidential Proclamation 906. Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon

ALTERNATIVE

Residents of Barangay Guinsaran in Nueva Vizcaya, Guinsaran says as small farms for their alternative livelihood after they lost their main source of income, fishing, as a result of the Petron oil spill that we asked Petron in Batangas province. Some fishermen earned P15,000 a day from fishing but they have since been driven on depending on relief goods following the oil spill.

Villagers discover toxic dump

LUCENA CITY—A DUMP OF hazardous chemical waste was discovered in the village of Mangilag Norte, Candelaria town in Quezon province, on affidavit of the anthropocide environmentalist group Tanggol Kalikasan (TK) said Tuesday.

Atilet Aparicio, TK program officer, said more than 90 plastic and steel drums containing different kinds of chemicals like mirbane acid, paint, among many other factory wastes, were found in the vicinity of the village.

"Some of the containers have labels that read—hazardous," Aparicio said in a mobile phone interview.

The dumping site, that has five man-made pits measuring two by three meters in diameter and at least three meters deep, was discovered inside a coconut plantation by Nilo S. of the village, some 2 km from the Maharlika Highway.

"The three pits were already filled with different kinds of chemical waste and were now covered. The two other pits were beginning to be dumped with newly arrived chemicals. The chemicals were just being poured into the dumping ground and then covered when filled," she said.

Some of the drums have labels that read Anglo Industry and Inverex Int'l located in Calamba, Laguna.

Aparicio said residents saw the drums being brought to the site by trucks.

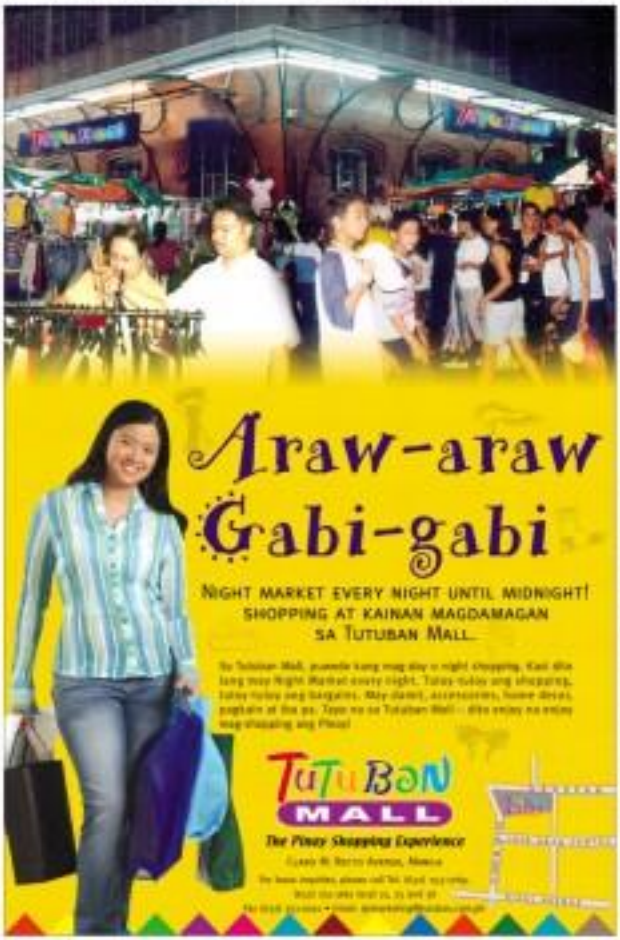
THE LABEL in one of the drums says it all.

She quoted village chief Oliver Hurtada as denying knowledge that what was being dumped in the area were chemical waste materials.

TK reported the information from Celso Nicasio, the Candelaria municipal environment and natural resources officer.

"Some of residents in the area could no longer bear the smell coming from the chemicals so they brought the matter to the attention of the local government," she added.

The dumping of the chemicals started a week ago, Aparicio said quoting the residents. Bella P. Madrid, Inquirer Southern Luzon



General says eggs won't ruin visit of UP head at PMA

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

FORT DEL PILAR, BAGUIO City—No eggs will land on University of the Philippines president Emerlinda Roman when she is given a taste of the Philippine Military Academy on Saturday.

This was the assurance of Lt. Gen. Leopoldo Maligalig, PMA superintendent, following the appearance of Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. at the UP Diliman campus last week when he was hit with eggs by some students.

Maligalig said the PMA Corps of Cadets is giving Roman an honor parade on Saturday in order to reinstate ties with the civilian community.

A video footage showed the eggs hitting Esperon as he walked out of a conference hall after speaking at a forum sponsored by an organization of political science students on Sept. 22.

Esperon canceled days later by declaring that the incident revealed the ill-mannered lack of breeding. The University Student Council refused to apologize to Esperon.

"I am certain the cadets will

always be disciplined... PMA and UP Baguio have always had a cordial relationship," said UP Baguio Chancellor Priscilla Macaraniban, who was also invited to the PMA ceremony.

Maligalig said the egg-throwing incident "is not an issue [because] the UP president already talked to the dean of staff [and] the students involved in the incident] can just make up the whole UP system."

The cadets had not reacted formally to the episode, according to a PMA professor.

But some cadets, he said, raised it during classroom discussions because the incident was in the news.

INQUIRER Southern Luzon

A DIVER interacts with a whale shark in the waters off Legazpi City

Double treat: Mayon + whale sharks

By Dave O. Valdez
Legazpi City

WHALE SHARKS ARE incredible creatures. Aside from being the largest fish in the world, growing to a length of over 40 feet, they feed almost exclusively on krill and plankton. How they get to that size on such a microscopic diet has fascinated biologists, divers and nature lovers for years.

Until recently, spotting whale sharks was able to finding a needle in a haystack. Conservationists discovered a few years ago that whale sharks frequented Donsol, Sorsogon when the krills call to their "buffet."

Recently, news that whale sharks were spotted 15 minutes from Legazpi City in Albay prompted my family to take a trip to the famed cradled under the shadow of the imposing Mayon. With the volcano having a mini-eruption, we figured that even if we were unlucky spotting the hunnidity, we could at least catch the breathtaking sight of Mayon spewing lava.

We arrived in the late afternoon just in time to view Mayon's majesty. By nightfall, glowing rocks and rivulets of lava could be seen slowly seeping from the volcano's crater and moving down its perfectly gentle slopes.

"Say—are sure we're far enough, Dad?" Kiko, my 12-year-old son asked with an anxious look on his face.

Thankfully, Mayon's show of restiveness was relatively mild this year. The city's tourism council even had instructions steering tourists to witness the "2006 Mayon Eruption."

Encounter

The next day we had breakfast in a little thatched hut along the black sand beach of Sorsogon Ilgas. The locals had just begun to organize themselves to cope with the expected crowds of tourists.

Each boat was required to have a Boarding Instruction Officer (BIO) to guide and regulate the animal interactions. A few boats were already out searching the waters. The excitement was palpable.

The paddle-powered "sibid-sibid" is a perfect boat to silently approach the sky dwelling, but I was apprehensive, knowing it would take hours to cover the area.

Even when Joe, our boatman, signaled a sighting, I was skeptical. Boatmen, though, have a way of seeing things that a typical tourist would never see until the last minute. But it seemed the insending were not confusing long enough so give us a chance to swim with them.

Just before noon though, that all changed. A bottle of boats gathered around a single spot and shouts of glee were the unmistakable signs that something was up.

From about 200 meters, I saw the dorsal fin and a tail briefly break surface. Excitement began jumping in the water. I donned my mask and fins and slipped in to the water to where I thought the whale shark would surface away from all the tourists.

Tips

GOING TO SEE THE BUTANDING of Legazpi? Bring a life jacket, swimming goggles or mask, and a pair of fins.

In the water, the sandy floor slopes down steeply just narrow from the shore so be prepared to jump into clear waters without seeing the bottom. Most boats are not motorized, so be prepared to use a paddle.

If you are a strong swimmer, you will get to see the whale sharks longer. If not, you'll need some luck and a good BIO to place you in the path of the slow swimming creatures. Look for Joe in Barangay Bigaa. He has the uncanny ability of spotting butanding even before they surface.

Within seconds, a juvenile not more than 15 feet in length passed slowly a few feet away from me. Its tiny eyes looking straight at me, it turned and went back toward the carnivores and boats. Closing it, I found myself in the middle of at least 20 swimmers ogling the creature. I was my nervous not on a sibid-sibid and talked him into the water.

Interaction

When he finally jumped in with me, another hunnidity had appeared. It was an adult 30-footer with a heavily scarred dorsal and caudal fin, old wounds unmistakably from an encounter with a boat propeller. Joe christened her "Pistol" because of her wounds.

In the geo-clear water, Kiko met his first butanding and with a gasp, he exclaimed, "It's so B-I-G!" Accompanying the shark were smaller fish called remoras that can attach themselves onto sharks with a suction-like feature at the top of their heads.

Tiranos, my 7-year-old daughter, was also in the water being pulled by my wife excitedly toward the smaller shark. The BIO had warned us not to touch it or direct our food at first sight because it might get spooked.

Sure enough, my daughter hardly said a word in the water although her eyes were never wider. Later, she exclaimed to Elena, "Did you hear me screaming in my head, Mom?"

We witnessed the juvenile whale shark "Violet" because it was the most playful. Once, Kiki went by the slowmotion yet more than 10 meters from the beach. Another time, it went under the sibid-sibid, gently nudged it, and slowly lifted the skiff almost out of the water.

My nephew, study was swimming in the late afternoon when he spotted the biggest butanding yet. He took turns chasing the female behemoth that must have been over 30 feet in length.

The next day, she was again spotted, this time with a smaller-sized whale shark trailing it. Pistol was there, too. The three circled slowly in the midst of at least a dozen swimmers, it ally an unforgettable.

As we reluctantly packed up at the end of the second day, you could see the locals pride in playing host to satisfied visitors. One hospitable hosts jokingly called us "Sakal pareto" (local drinks) to differentiate us from the foreign tourists already making their way to Legazpi.

Why do these animals frequent Legazpi and Donsol? Are they feeding? Are they mating? Are the butanding of Legazpi actually the ones in Donsol? These are exciting questions that researchers need to answer.

Donsol's whale sharks are plentiful from December to May, while those in Legazpi seem to congregate from June onwards, making whale shark-watching a year-round event in Bicol.

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Dengue spares no one, says DOH chief

PROTECTION. Fourth-graders recite in their class at the Barangka Elementary School in Marikina City wearing jogging pants under their school uniforms as protection from dengue. —NOEL CELIS

Jinggoy's son still in hospital

By TJ Burgonio and Jeannie Aning

THE CONDITION OF OPPOSITION Sen. Jinggoy Estrada's 13-year-old son has stabilized, but he remained in the hospital for treatment of dengue, which his father said he could have contracted at his school in San Juan.

"He's OK, his fever is subsiding," Estrada said of son Joseph Lyn Manuel, the second of his four children.

The senator's son, a seventh grader at Xavier School in Greenhills, was discharged from the Cardinal Santos Medical Center on Tuesday and transferred to the San Juan Medical Center.

"The reason for the transfer was because there were a lot of cases at Cardinal Santos. And since his resistance was weak, we decided to transfer him to the San Juan Medical Center," Estrada, son of deposed President Joseph Estrada, told reporters.

The Estradas brought the boy to the hospital on Wednesday last week, after school officials advised him to go home because he was running a high fever. The doctors found him positive for dengue.

"It's a good thing we brought him early because he was running a high fever that hovered from 40 to 41 degree Celsius then dropped to 37 only to rise to 39, 40. That was really very, very bothersome," the senator said, recalling his son's first day at the hospital.

Estrada believed that his son contracted dengue at his school. "I already wrote the principal to take the necessary measures to avoid future incidents," he said.

In a press conference, Health Secretary Francisco Duque III reiterated that nobody is safe from contracting dengue.

"Dengue chooses no one; it chooses no one in economic class, age," said the health chief.

Duque revealed he himself had dengue in 1996.

The Secretary said he knew right away that he would have dengue because he was conscious of being bitten by a mosquito as he was having his car repaired in a dark dingy place one day.

"I was wearing shorts and it was 10 a.m. in the morning then I got bitten by this nasty looking mosquito which began rushing to his full satisfaction."

He said he later had a 40-degree Celsius fever that kept him bedridden for a week. He described the fever as "bone-breaking" and recounted how rashes began appearing all over his body, all dengue symptoms.

Duque said he was no longer confined in a hospital because his wife, who was also a doctor, took care of him.

He added that although a patient may or may not opt for confinement, those suspected of having dengue should be brought to the hospital for monitoring.

Duque said the display and severity of symptoms vary according to the type of dengue virus, as well as the patient's state of nutrition and immune system.

Theoretically, he added, a person with a strong immune system could be exposed to all four dengue virus and not get sick at all.

Normally, a dengue patient would only develop immunity for one type, although there have been studies showing that exposure to one translates to immunity to all four.

A vaccine is being developed for all viruses and may be available by 2010, he added.

Health officials have reported some 16,311 dengue cases from January to September 18 this year. Being closely monitored is the presence of fatal cases the incidence has been notably high.

Dr. Eric Tayag, head of the DOH's National Epidemiology Center, said the figure may go up to 28,000 cases before year-end. Tayag, however, said the fatality rate remained relatively low at two percent, and the projected number of cases for 2004 is still about 40 percent less than last year's 31,000.

Earlier, Tayag said the spread of dengue will likely stop in October, when the rainy season ends.

Meanwhile, everyone is advised to clean their homes and backyards of possible breeding grounds of dengue-carrying mosquitoes. With reports from Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

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Ombudsman sues Binay for graft

COA report showed alleged anomalies in ₱231-M furniture deal

By Norman Bordadora and Ezra V. Quierzando

GRAFT CHARGES WERE FILED at the Sandiganbayan yesterday against Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, his wife Elenita and several other individuals for the alleged anomalous purchase of furniture worth P231 million for the new City Hall from 1999 to 2001.

The case against the Binays, filed by Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez, was based on a complaint filed in 2003 by the mayor's political rival, Rolando Bellaflor, based on a Commission on Audit report.

The COA report showed that the bidding process for the construction was allegedly rigged to favor certain companies and that the furniture purchased were overpriced by over P53 million.

Elenita was the Makati mayor in 1999 to 2001 when the construction was made. Binay, on the other hand, took over the deal when he assumed the post in the latter half of 2001.

Also named as respondents in the complaint were former city councilor Salustiano Mangliwan, city administrator Nilanor Sarmiento Jr., former city treasurer Luz Fernando and general services department chief Dominico Aquilloza.

Charges were likewise filed against Lt. Ret. Oking, Jason Li and Victor Khatar, corporate officers of Office Gallery Investment Inc. (OGII), Bella Aquino, chief executive officer and Bernadette Aquino, corporate officer of Asia Concept Intermodal Inc. (ACII) and several John and Jane Does.

BINAY

Records of the case showed that the COA had found irregularities in the bidding and awarding of the purchase orders worth over P225 million to OGII and ACII.

It also discovered that the purchases were overpriced by over P53 million and that expensive purchases worth over P58 million were also made, resulting in "undue injury to the government."

According to the COA, the companies that were awarded the purchase orders—OGII, ACII and MPT International Co—all had the same group of owners.

When reached by the Inquirer, Binay said that he would first study the case filed against him before making any statement.

"I don't know what the case is all about because I have yet to receive a copy. I will have to call my lawyers and discuss it with them. But I have no qualms about the findings of the Ombudsman [sic]," he added.

Binay, who also heads the United Opposition, said he would abide by the legal process and face the charges.

"Damoves-ornes na tayo at ... (This is becoming a daily thing). But we will follow procedure," the mayor told the Inquirer.

The filing of the case came a day after Binay filed his reply to an administrative case slapped against him by Bellaflor, this time over the alleged existence of ghost employees in the City Hall payroll.

In a press conference yesterday, Binay said he and his co-respondents—Vice Mayor Ernesto Mercado and the city's 14 councilors—complied on Tuesday with Malacañang's order for them to file their replies to the complaint.

The mayor had said in a previous press briefing that he may be sent on the list of opposition mayors to be suspended by the government, after Pasay Mayor Pierre-ote "Peewee" Trivinio.

MARGARAWAY

Tulfo brothers charged with extortion, grave threats

By Tina G. Santos

A CUSTOMS OFFICIAL YESTERday filed charges of extortion and grave threats against business columnist Ramon Tulfo and his brother, Raffy.

In a complaint filed in the office of Manila Assistant Prosecutor Isidro Solis, Bureau of Customs (BoC) collector Ma. Loreilyn Mangurang—who is assigned to the Port of Subic—accused the Tulfos of extorting money from her after she used Chinese logistics in Feng Wei in 2001.

According to Mangurang, she filed charges against the trader, whom she said was a close friend of Ramon Tulfo, after BOC officials seized 19 drums of chemicals allegedly used in making methamphetamine hydrochloride or shabu in June 2000. Mangurang was then the district collector in the Port of Zamboanga.

The shipment, she added, was consigned to Wee, Sonnie Perez dear Joseph Estrada's adviser on economic matters in Mindanao.

Mangurang said that when the charges were filed against Wee, Sonnie called her up and asked her to withdraw the case. He threatened to come up with a series of exposés against her if she refused, she added.

When she ignored his demand, Mangurang said Raffy called her up, urged her to drop the case and demanded money from her.

Concerned about her family's reaction to an exposé about her, Mangurang said she deposited P5,000 in the bank account of Raffy's wife, Jocelyn Pax, who was also named as a respondent in the case.

She added that Raffy called her up again and demanded P500,000. She said that after a series of negotiations, the Tulfos agreed to settle for P300,000 but the only money she could raise was P100,000.

Mangurang said that when she failed to pay the balance, Ramon criticized her in his columns in the Inquirer, insinuating that she was being used by the Lobregats against Wee.

She added that Raffy also hit her in his columns in another newspaper. To satisfy the Tulfos, she said she made several deposits in Pax's account, the amounts ranging from P5,000 to P10,000.

The Tulfos, meanwhile, denied Mangurang's accusations.

Ramon said, "Why did it take her so long to file a case against me? She filed the case against Wee in 2001. Her motive is questionable. Either she's riding with the tide or trying to curry favor with [Vice Governor] Wee in vengeance."

Raffy, on the other hand, described Mangurang as a "very, very close friend." He confirmed that she deposited money twice in his wife's account but it was done voluntarily and to help the people who had sought his help through his public service programs.

Infighting continues to split Red Cross-QC chapter

By DJ Yap

IN A SIGN THAT THE POWER struggle within the Philippine National Red Cross-Quezon City chapter will not be resolved anytime soon, the chair Danny Libun has announced his intention to file a P50-million libel suit against his accuser, the chapter administrator.

The former Quezon City councilman said he would press this suit against PNRC-QC administrator Anita Torres, was done after she accused him of stealing more than P2.1 million from the organization.

The charges stemmed from a long-standing dispute between PNRC and its Quezon City chapter. Both are fighting for control over the chapter funds, with the mother organization refusing to acknowledge the legitimacy of the current board of directors chaired by Libun.

A Quezon City judge recently declared the board, which was elected in June, as the de facto board authorized to handle the chapter funds. But the PNRC has maintained that the elections were null and void.

At a press conference at the PNRC-QC yesterday, Libun said Torres' charges were malicious, baseless and fabricated.

Torres had accused him of illegally withdrawing P2.1 million from the PNRC's bank account and forcibly opening her office to take some P700,000 in cash disbursers.

Libun said he only transferred the funds of the chapter from its original bank account under the name of PNRC to a new account for the PNRC-QC chapter itself.

Torres declined to comment on Libun's statements, as well as the complaints she filed, saying she was acting in behalf of the PNRC.

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SC justices should take a look at Jeff

RONALD "JEFF" QUESADA, a quadriplegic paralyzed on both arms and both feet sentenced to life imprisonment for rape, has been accused of relative comfort in the maximum security compound of the National Bilibid Prison.

He has been adopted by Sigue-Sigue Sputnik, one of the biggest gangs in the maximum security compound. Some gang members have been assigned to take turns looking after his basic needs like eating and answering the call of nature. Jeff has to be spoon-fed when he eats. He also has to be helped by two or three men in going to the toilet.

Sigue-Sigue Sputnik adopted Jeff as one of their own because he's Tagalog. All the other members are from Tagalog-speaking regions.

The other major gangs in maximum security are Sigue-Sigue Commando, ORD, Bahala Na Aids and Hamahong Hard. These gangs represent the other ethnic or regional groupings in the country.

Jeff's conviction is on appeal. But it may take some time for the higher courts to affirm or reverse the verdict of the Bulacan Regional Trial Court.

Jeff's case is unique in that he is probably the only quadriplegic in the world who has been sent to prison for rape.

The judge or judges who handled the rape case didn't believe the testimony of Jeff's physical therapist who said that it was impossible for him to commit rape. Jeff's co-accused, a female inmate, is also serving time in the Women's Correctional in Mandaluyong.

I'm taking the exhibit for Jeff even though he has already been convicted because I'm 100 percent sure of his innocence.

When his case was first brought to my attention at my Inquirer TV program, "Isumbong mo kay Tulfo," I was dumbfounded. How could a guy who could hardly move be charged with raping not just one but three women in one day? Not to mention the other gang members who had to help him in the rape?

People who saw the "Isumbong" episodes where we featured Jeff couldn't help but comment on the stupidity of the charge.

I know that the honorable members of the Supreme Court are very wise men and women. (I'm not soft-soaping them) but they should speed up Jeff's appeal.

I know it's not proper for them, but if they could only go see Jeff's condition or have somebody take a look at him, I'm sure the high court magistrates would immediately arrive at a judicious conclusion.

* * *

Another libel case has been filed against me just as my brother Bally by another person, this time by Bobi Tiatco, Cebu Governor Lourdes Blanga's son.

The libel case stemmed from my series of articles about her where she was excessive collector of Carabaos in 2001.

Why did it take her five years to file the libel suit? Who counsel her?

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

LEYTE V ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
INVITATION TO BID
For Leyte V Electric Cooperative, Inc. (LEYECO V), Brgy. San Pablo, Ormoc City, Leyte, invites all eligible suppliers to submit bids for the Supply, Delivery, Installation, Testing, and Commissioning of one unit twenty (20) MVA, 69/13.2 kV power transformer.
Bid documents shall be issued to interested bidders upon payment of non-refundable fee in the amount of Six Thousand Pesos Only (Php 6,000.00) starting October 9, 2006.
Pre-bid conference will be held on October 11, 2006 at 2 o'clock in the afternoon at LEYECO V Boardroom, Brgy. San Pablo, Ormoc City.
Sealed bids will be received by the Pre-bids and Awards Committee (PBAC) at LEYECO V Main Office in Brgy. San Pablo, Ormoc City, Leyte on November 1, 2006 at 11:30 in the afternoon, at which time and place, said proposals will be opened and read in the presence of bidders or their authorized representatives.
LEYECO V reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, or waive any minor defects or informalities therein and to accept any or all offers as proposals as may be considered most convenient and advantageous to the Cooperative. It assumes no obligation whatsoever for any expenses or loss incurred by its rejecting the bidder in the preparation of bids, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.
Engr. JOVENAL R. KLEIHA
General Manager

V. Oliva; 80

VIRGINIA NICOLAS OLIVA, OF Sta. Maria, Bulacan, passed away on Sept. 24. Her body lies in state in the family residence at #29 Sto. Niño 1st St., Sta. Maria, Bulacan. Interment will be on Sept. 28, Thursday, at St. Pascual Memorial Park after a Mass to be held at 2 p.m. at the Sto. Niño Parish Church in Barasoain, Sta. Maria, Bulacan.

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0918 8985566
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Tell us about it!
Get involved in community affairs. Share the good news, and the bad (if it means improving our city). In short, make Metro Manila a safer, more attractive and exciting place to live in. All it takes is just a tip from you through a text or picture message to us.
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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Israelis to leave Lebanon by Sept. 30–UN

BEIRUT—U.N. COMMANDER Gen. Alain Pellegrini said on Tuesday Israel troops should be out of south Lebanon within days, but Israel media said a full withdrawal could be delayed after a meeting with the UN peacekeeper did not reach full agreement.

Israeli forces have gradually been pulling out of territory they captured during a 34-day war with Hezbollah guerrillas that started with a cross-border raid on Aug. 14. Israeli and Lebanese officers met with the commander of the UN peacekeeping force at the border on Tuesday to discuss the continued withdrawal.

"It is my belief that with the necessary cooperation by both parties we should see the Israeli army leave south Lebanon by the end of this month," UN force commander Major General Alain Pellegrini said in a statement after the meeting.

But Israel's Channel One television said that the government at the meeting over the dismissing of Hezbollah to southern Lebanon meant a withdrawal could be delayed beyond the weekend.

Asked about the report, Alexandra Sandu, spokesperson for the UN force, said the cooperation in the process to be finalized by the end of the month," Ivanhoe said.

Israeli Defense Minister Amir Peretz said earlier on Tuesday that Israel hoped to complete its withdrawal soon but that this would depend on agreement being reached with the UN's force on rules of engagement.

"I hope very much that during the coming week, in the next a few more days, we will complete the withdrawal," Peretz said.

"There are arrangements, understandings (with) withdraw once which we intend to complete in order to set the rules—what is permitted and what is forbidden," he told reporters.

Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mark Regev said that Israel would withdraw once it was convinced that the terms of UN resolution 1701 that ended the war would be observed.

"We have no desire or intention to prolong our stay in Lebanon, and the reasons it is understood that the other relevant party of 1701 will also be fulfilled, then of course Israel will be ready to pull out," he said.

Resolution 1701 specifically calls for a total arms embargo to prevent arms reaching Hezbollah and the total dissolution of any armed Hezbollah presence south of the Litani River, and we're hopeful that the Lebanese government and the international forces will be acting to provide those conditions to make the Israeli withdrawal expeditious," Ismael said. Israel has over several 94 percent of that territory to the United Nations force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which is finding its movements to monitor the truce.

Israeli officials said earlier in the month they hoped to withdraw all troops by last weekend, but this was delayed while discussions with UNIFIL continued.

"There are going to be all these international forces who speak different languages," said Miri Eisin, a spokesperson for Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert. "They will all be under UNIFIL but there is a question of their coordination with the Lebanese army and their coordination with Israeli units.

"There rules of engagement entail working with the Lebanese army, the Israeli army—what is going to be done." Reuters

US wants to verify Iran nuke suspension

WASHINGTON—THE UNITED States on Tuesday cured "hopeful" about Tehran's decision to suspend its uranium enrichment activities but insisted countries were still on top Diplomacy talks.

European over the talks, due to be held Wednesday in an undisclosed location, was that the diagnosed by a senior official who knew that Tehran was done to announcing a halt to uranium enrichment.

The suspension would last 60 days to allow time for more talks with European nations, The Washington Post reported.

Asked whether the report was true, State Department spokesperson Sean McCormack told reporters: "As accurate as more on that question would assume having very clear and accurate insight into the decision-making process of the Iranian regime, which we don't have." McCormack said there were promising signals from Tehran.

"There have been hopeful statements in the Iranian media and we've seen that it was the Iranian nuclear negotiator, for example, Ali'S test if those are borne out," he said.

"We certainly hope that the answer is, 'Yes, we will suspend,' as well verifiable suspend, in order to get to negotiations.' ... That's certainly our preferred course of action here," he said.

But Iran must comply with a suspension of uranium enrichment as outlined by the UN watchdog watching, the International Atomic Energy Agency, said the UN Security Council. AFP

THIS COMBO undated photograph shows National Research Council of Canada (NRC) scientists Marc Rioux examining the virtual 3-D model of the Louvre's Da Vinci's "Mona Lisa" using a multi-modulation display system also developed at NRC. AFP

3D imaging reveals 'Mona Lisa' incarnations

OTTAWA—(REUTERS) (A VIRTUAL) "Mona Lisa" originally wore a delicate translucent garment, her hair gathered up in a bun, details that have disappeared under varnish but are now visible under 3D imaging, scientists said Tuesday.

Researchers at the National Research Council of Canada (NRC) announced their findings of the first 3D images of the masterpiece, using a complex laser scanner, at a news conference in Ottawa.

"This is the Mona Lisa as we have never seen her before," said NRC president Pierre Coulombe.

A team of NRC researchers had traveled to Paris in October 2004 to conduct the research on public day the Louvre Museum's most viewed painting, at the request of the French state museums agency Centre de Recherche et de Restauration des Musees de France (C2RMF).

The 3D scans revealed that the woman with the enigmatic smile was originally painted with her hair tied back in a bun, even though today it appears loose on her shoulders.

The restoration settles an old controversy because only parts of women of had curlas were then hair loose in 16th century Italy, said C2RMF painter Bruno Mottin, and the real Mona Lisa was a woman of social status.

One of her garments, similar to fashion that pregnant or nursing women wore in the period, was also her under yellow varnish and no longer visible to the naked eye, infrared rays showed.

"That is something that had never been seen until now," Mottin said.

The real Mona Lisa had three children. Da Vinci was commissioned by wealthy Florentine businessman Francesco del Giocondo to paint his wife between 1503 and 1506 after the birth of their second child, but he kept it and worked on it until his death, likely changing her hair and clothes between.

In the original "Mona Lisa," the subject gripped her chair more tightly, and she is not resting against the back of her chair, as some believed, her sitting upright, some showed. AFP

WORLD BRIEFS

World's 1st zero-gravity surgery

MIRAMAR, FRANCE—A team of French doctors planned the slice to pull off an operation Tuesday on a patient in the world's first zero-gravity surgery operating aboard an airplane specially modified to perform it, it was announced. The injured heart is part of a broader effort to develop robots for future surgeries from a distance, in space or on Earth, the doctors said. The surgeons will be stopped by the audio video far less 300 Zero-G in the three-hour operation. The plane was scheduled to take off Wednesday and returning from the institute for Biomedical Research of the Armies in Bretigny-sur-Orge, southwest of Paris. It was to take 30 other scientific researchers, called patients, during the flight. AP

'Tokyo Rose' dies at 90

OMORI—Ikuko Toguri McNaughton, who was convicted and later pardoned of being the Allied propaganda radio "Tokyo Rose," died Sunday of natural causes, relatives' nephew William Toguri, She was 90. Tokyo Rose was the name given by soldiers to a female radio broadcaster responsible for anti-American broadcasts during the Japanese-American military fighting in the Pacific theater. Disputes over the role of Ms. Toguri differed among the pardoned suspects. In 1949, she became the only person to be convicted of treason in American history and served six years in prison. Of Japanese ancestry, she was born in Los Angeles on July 4, 1916, to Japanese immigrant parents. AP

Enron exec gets 6 years

HOUSTON—The architect of one of the biggest corporate frauds in US history was sentenced Tuesday to six years in prison, but Lawyers say that the prosecutors allowed Jeffrey Skilling, Enron's former chief executive officer to avoid a longer sentence. Justice Pastore withheld a decision on whether to order restitution. US District Judge Kenneth Hoyt said Pastore ordered Skilling to surrender the judge to the federal jail to begin his sentence. He said he is eligible to join

Ukraine" without hitherto. "Pastore also agreed to the Iran interlocutor who came to testify appointment and offered an apology. "I cannot undo the harm I have caused," Pastore told the court, adding that he was ashamed of what he had done. AP

Saddam genocide trial postpone

BAGHDAD—After the ruling Saddam Hussein stand court again, the judge presiding the deposed Baathist's genocide trial abruptly postponed the case until Oct. 9 in Saddam and his co-defendants could consult with lawyers who are boycotting the trial for the time being. The court session Tuesday degenerated into a shouting match with Judge Mohammed al-Khalifa blasting of Saddam's co-defendants for "all dress" and "chutzpa." The case charged the Ba'ath party official Izzat al-Douri in 1988, shouted back that the judge was not respecting them and had already decided their guilt. New York Times Adam Jones

Bulgaria, Romania to join EU

STRASBOURG—The European Commission on Tuesday gave Bulgaria and Romania the go-ahead to join the European Union in January, but cited the continued corruption problems and imposed on two countries. The 25th and 27th members of the European club will be allowed to join up on Jan. 1, 2007, Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso announced in a plenary session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg. "I would like to congratulate the people and the authorities of Bulgaria and Romania for all the efforts they have produced to meet the conditions for accession to the European Union," said Barroso. AFP

PAMPANGA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Sindalan, San Fernando, Pampanga
Tel. No. (045) 435-0001 to 05 Telefax No. (045) 435-0123

September 20, 2006

INVITATION FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION OF BIDDERS

PAMPANGA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (PELCO II) HEREBY INVITES INTERESTED BIDDERS OF JOHN ROGER, GUIDED, PAMPANGA'S SYSTEMS TO SUBMIT BIDDING PROPOSALS FOR THE SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF THE FOLLOWING:

Item	Description	Quantity
1.	Medium Pressure A (MPA) Steel Tubular Steel Concrete Poles	40 units
	Steel Tubular Steel Concrete Poles	40 units
	Steel Tubular Steel Concrete Poles	40 units
	Steel Tubular Steel Concrete Poles	40 units
	Steel Tubular Steel Concrete Poles	40 units
2.	3-Phase, 50 KVA, 13.8 KV/230 V	10 units
3.	3-Phase, 100 KVA, 13.8 KV/230 V	10 units
4.	3-Phase, 167.5 KVA, 13.8 KV/230 V	10 units
5.	3-Phase, 250 KVA, 13.8 KV/230 V	10 units
6.	3-Phase, 500 KVA, 13.8 KV/230 V	10 units
7.	3-Phase, 750 KVA, 13.8 KV/230 V	10 units
8.	3-Phase, 1000 KVA, 13.8 KV/230 V	10 units
9.	3-Phase, 1500 KVA, 13.8 KV/230 V	10 units
10.	3-Phase, 2000 KVA, 13.8 KV/230 V	10 units
11.	3-Phase, 2500 KVA, 13.8 KV/230 V	10 units
12.	3-Phase, 3000 KVA, 13.8 KV/230 V	10 units
13.	3-Phase, 3500 KVA, 13.8 KV/230 V	10 units
14.	3-Phase, 4000 KVA, 13.8 KV/230 V	10 units
15.	3-Phase, 4500 KVA, 13.8 KV/230 V	10 units
16.	3-Phase, 5000 KVA, 13.8 KV/230 V	10 units
17.	3-Phase, 5500 KVA, 13.8 KV/230 V	10 units
18.	3-Phase, 6000 KVA, 13.8 KV/230 V	10 units
19.	3-Phase, 6500 KVA, 13.8 KV/230 V	10 units
20.	3-Phase, 7000 KVA, 13.8 KV/230 V	10 units
21.	3-Phase, 7500 KVA, 13.8 KV/230 V	10 units
22.	3-Phase, 8000 KVA, 13.8 KV/230 V	10 units
23.	3-Phase, 8500 KVA, 13.8 KV/230 V	10 units
24.	3-Phase, 9000 KVA, 13.8 KV/230 V	10 units
25.	3-Phase, 9500 KVA, 13.8 KV/230 V	10 units
26.	3-Phase, 10000 KVA, 13.8 KV/230 V	10 units

The pre-qualification documents may be purchased for an amount of Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00) per set from the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) Secretariat, 3rd Floor, PELCO II Building, Sindalan, San Fernando, Pampanga. Interested bidders may also download the pre-qualification documents from the PELCO II website at www.pelco2.com.ph and submit the duly accomplished pre-qualification documents to the BAC Secretariat on or before 10:00 a.m. of October 27, 2006.

Interested bidders to provide their complete contact information for the following:

1. Company's Name
2. Contact Person
3. Company's Address
4. Telephone Number/s
5. Fax Number
6. Email Address

To all interested bidders please prepare and submit the following documents to the BAC Secretariat on or before the date specified above:

1. Company's Profile
2. Latest Income Tax Return
3. Audited Financial Statement
4. Net Financial Contracting Capacity (NFCC) Computation
5. Valid and Current Mayor's/Business Permit
6. Valid and Current PhilGEPS Registration Certificate (Platinum Membership)

All qualified bidders should submit bidding documents to the BAC Secretariat with the corresponding bid security in the form of cash, manager's check, bank draft/guarantee or irrevocable letter of credit issued by a universal or commercial bank on or before the date and time specified above. Late bids shall not be accepted.

The PELCO II Board of Directors reserves the right to reject any and all bids, waive any defect therein, and accept the bid which in its judgment will best serve the interest of the cooperative.

For more information, please call Mr. Roberto S. Lagandaon Jr. at PELCO II Office at telephone number 435-0001 loc. 2102.

By authority of the Board:

(SGD) ENGR. RAUL A. CONLU
President / Chairperson

Attested by:

(SGD) Mr. Roberto S. Lagandaon Jr.
BAC Secretariat

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES
1598 M. H. del Pilar corner Dr. J. Quintos Streets, Malate, Manila
Tel. Nos. 522-0000; 522-7231 connecting all departments

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Land Bank of the Philippines invites prospective contractors to submit their sealed bid proposals and to apply for eligibility and to bid for the projects as stated below:

Item / Description	Approved Budget	Time Schedule (Pre-Bid Conference)	Time Schedule (Opening of Bids)	Date Advertised / Post
1. Civil Retrofitting of Commercial Condominium Unit, Main Office Under the Net Metering Program (Solaren Project)	P5,000,000.00	September 20, 2006 2:00 PM	October 11, 2006 10:00 AM	P 15,000.00
2. LBP Iloilo Thermal Tank Repair (CBRD), Iloilo City (Civil Works)	P5,000,000.00	October 5, 2006 2:00 PM	October 20, 2006 10:00 AM	P 5,000.00
3. Repair of LANDBANK Tiles	P5,000,000.00	October 5, 2006 2:00 PM	October 20, 2006 10:00 AM	P 5,000.00
4. Civil Works, Balcony Railings Renovation, Infilled Lavatory Area, Roof Overhead Repairs	P5,000,000.00	October 5, 2006 2:00 PM	October 20, 2006 10:00 AM	P 5,000.00
5. Civil Works, Balcony Railings Renovation, Infilled Lavatory Area, Roof Overhead Repairs	5,000,000.00			

The Bid Documents shall be available at the Head Accounts Department (Building Administration), 2nd Floor, LBP Building, Malate, Manila from the date of publication.

The Pre-Bid Conference shall be held at CBD Conference Room, 20th Floor, LANDBANK Plaza, 1598 M.H. del Pilar St., Malate, Manila.

The bidders shall strictly follow the eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals in the bid documents. Sealed envelopes containing the proposals and sealed envelopes shall be filed by the bidders on the above-stated address.

For more information, please call the LANDBANK Regional/Area Management Groups/Units and BAC Secretariat at Tel. Nos. 522-0000 to 09.

LANDBANK reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. Nos. (632) 920-6401 • (632) 920-6446
(632) 920-6055 • (632) 920-6641
Web site: http://www.sss.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
IBID No. 2006-021 (Cash)

SSS SELF-SERVICE INFORMATION TERMINALS

Supply, delivery and set-up into operational state fifty (50) units Self-Service Information Terminals and one (1) unit Management Terminal

1. The SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM (SSS) intends to apply the sum of **₱10,184,000.00** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the above-proposed procurement of Self-Service Information Terminals.

Item	Description	Amount	Source of Fund
Item01	Hardware & Software	₱9,743,370.00	173008 Approved Budget for Computer Equipment - Kiosks
Item02	Land Maintenance Service	₱ 1,251,630.00	Budget for Operating Expenditures
	TOTAL	₱10,995,000.00	2006 Continuing Appropriation

Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at bid opening.

2. The SSS now invites bids from eligible bidders for the supply, delivery and set-up into operational state the required hardware and software. Supply, delivery and installation of the SOKIOS are required within **sixty (60) calendar days** after contract signing. Bidders may bid for one (1) or more items. Only one (1) qualified bidder is contracted to deliver 1 of the Bidding Documents as mentioned in Section 17 of the Bidding Documents.

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part II (IRR-II) of Republic Act No. 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act", and is limited to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to R.A. 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only bids from bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The procedure to be used is the Two-Envelope System (2 Cycle) of the Bidding Documents. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall undergo the post-qualification steps in order to finally determine the bidder's ability to perform the contract. The Terms of Reference (TOR) and the Technical Specifications, including the Technical Requirements of the project, are contained in the Bidding Documents. The contract shall then be awarded to the bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) who meets determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the **BIDDING AND AWARDS COMMITTEE** Secretariat, 3rd Floor, SSS Main Building, Diliman, Quezon City and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a **non-refundable fee of ₱10,000.00**. This method of payment will be on a cash basis payable at the SSS Collection Department, SSS Main Building, Diliman, Quezon City upon presentation of SSS Form W-8. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective bidder or his authorized representative.

6. The SSS will hold a Pre-Bid conference to all interested parties on **October 10, 2006** at **9:00a.m.** Green Room, 10th Floor, SSS Main Bldg., East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City.

7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be received at the Green Room, 10th Floor, SSS Main Bldg., East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City **before October 17, 2006 not later than 9:00a.m.** All bids must be accompanied by a Bid guaranty in the form and amount indicated in the Bid Tender Documents. Late bids shall not be accepted.

8. Bid opening shall be held on **October 17, 2006 at 9:30a.m.** Green Room, 10th Floor, SSS Main Bldg., East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the given address.

9. The **SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM** reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
THE SECRETARIAT
4th Floor, SSS Main Building
East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. # (632) 920-6401 to 07 loc. 3604-3621 to 22 local
Email – bac@sss.gov.ph
Facsimile number – (632) 924-1960

THE CHAIRMAN
BIDS & AWARDS COMMITTEE

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Olanico

Thailand junta narrows choice for new premier

BANGKOK—THAILAND'S junta narrowed its search for a new prime minister Wednesday, as a popular retired general emerged as a major contender alongside a former head of the World Trade Organization.

The junta leader Gen. Sonthi Boonyaratglin, has promised to name a civilian premier within days but said Tuesday that the junta would remain as a National Security Council to keep a tight check on the new government.

The leading candidate for the premiership had been seen as former WTO boss Supachai Panitchpakdi, whose leadership could reassure cautious among investors about Thailand's economic future.

But South Indicated that retired military officers would be considered candidates, sparking speculation in Thai media that the job could go to the respected former army boss Gen. Surayud Chulanont.

A spokesperson said Wednesday that Thailand's junta will name a new prime minister this weekend, but the generals have not yet decided who they want to take the job.

Boonyaratglin "is scheduled to have a work audience on Saturday to submit the interim constitution for royal approval, and the name of the new prime minister will be announced one day after," this first, Thanip Sonkyoo told AFP.

But he said the junta had not yet chosen the person to replace ousted premier Thaksin Shinawatra.

"As of today, it's unclear who will become the next prime minister," he said.

SURAYUD AFP

SUPACHAI REUTERS

Surayud, 65, is a career soldier who briefly became a Buddhist monk after retiring. He now sits on the Privy Council, the unelected cabal of advisers to Thailand's revered King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

The Bangkok Post newspaper said Wednesday that Surayud has already been encouraged to accept the job, but that no decision had been made.

He remains a popular figure among the military where he is credited with professionalizing the armed forces and reopening his deep loyalty to the king.

The king has given his endorsement to the generals, a move which is widely credited with helping to prevent violence after the country's first coup in 15 years. Any prime minister they choose would be overturned by the king, many officials say.

But if the military decides to name one of their own as prime minister, it could raise new questions about how tightly clenched the iron fist is to keep the new group in power.

Sonthi told AFP in an interview Tuesday that the governing military council would work alongside the new government "to make sure it no longer has the room to slow down."

After running Thaksin down in a late-night coup on Sept. 19, the junta said they had moved to eliminate rampant corruption under the billionaire political icon's regime and to restore democratic institutions that he had undermined.

The generals also vowed not the constitutions, clamped down on the media, banned gatherings and imposed martial law.

They have promised the military-appointed premier will only remain for one year, until a new constitution can be written and elections held in October 2007. AFP

Bush orders Iraq intel report made public

WASHINGTON—PRESIDENT GEORGE W. Bush blunted political opponents on Tuesday by unilaterally breaking from a secret intelligence assessment on global terrorism and then made public the report's main conclusion that the long war had become a "cause celebre" for Islamic extremists.

Democrats had seized on leaked portions of the National Intelligence Estimate to criticize the administration's handling of the Iraq war and members of the US Congress had pressed the White House to declassify further the document.

At a news conference with Afghan President Hamid Karzai, Bush said it was "a bad habit for our government to declassify every time there's a leak." But he said he decided to make it public "you can read it for yourself" and stop the speculation that he said was aimed at weakening the American public.

"Somebody has taken it upon themselves to leak classified information for political purposes," Bush said.

The office of intelligence director John Negroponte released a 3-1/2 page version of the April report "Trends in Global Terrorism: Implications for the United States" compiled by the 16 US spy agencies hours after Bush ordered it declassified.

"The Iraq conflict has become the 'cause celebre' for jihadists, breeding a deep resentment of US involvement in the Muslim world and galvanizing supporters for the global jihadist movement," the report said.

"Should jihadist-heavy Iraq prevail over themselves, and be perceived, by hard-liners, as having defeated a superpower, this would confer upon the jihadist movement a significant boost in morale and propaganda that would help recruitment, fundraising, and overall perceptions of the jihadist movement's success," it said.

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BUSH AFP

Japan PM to mend ties with neighbors

TOKYO—JAPAN'S new nationalist Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has pledged to repair battered relations with Asian neighbors while also pursuing a more assertive foreign policy and overhauling the country's pacifist constitution.

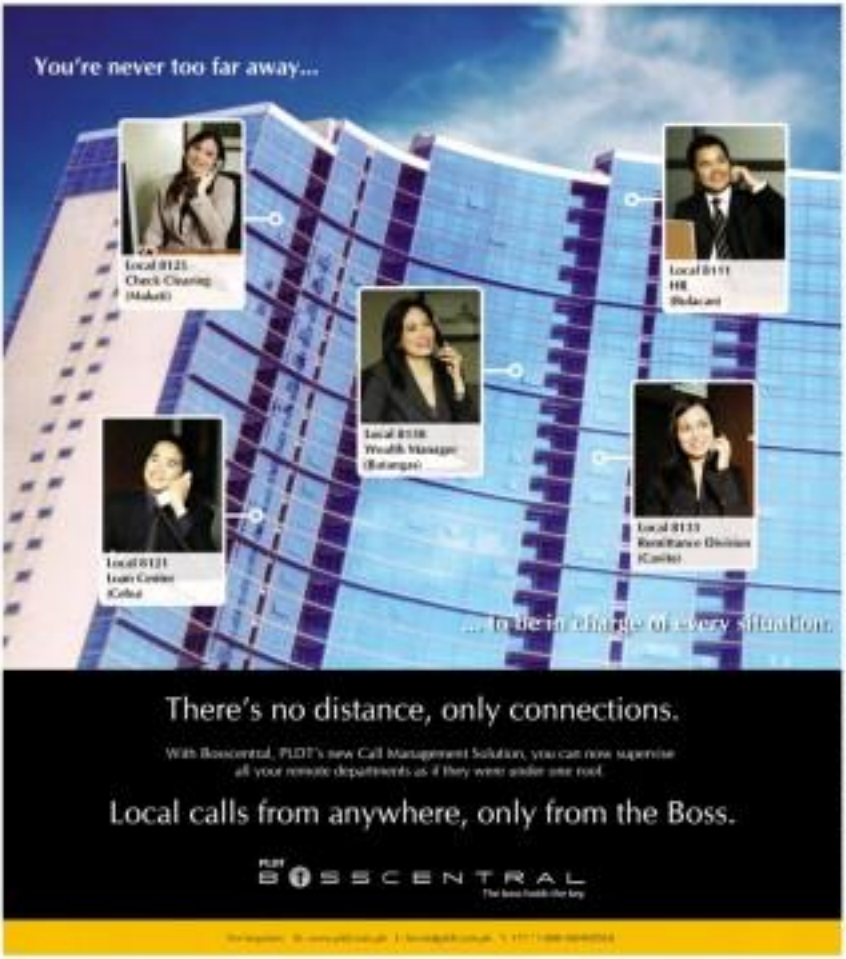
Abe, 52, the handpicked successor to the outgoing prime minister, Junichiro Koizumi, was overwhelmingly voted into office on Tuesday in parliament to continue his predecessor's economic reforms, win in spending and boost the country's international profile.

"This does not mean to blindly assert Japan's national interests, but to ask what role Japan should play in the region and the world, and what the international community should strive for," he declared in his first news conference as prime minister last Tuesday.

One of Abe's top challenges will be repairing Japan's deteriorating ties with China and South Korea. Beijing and Seoul on Tuesday renewed criticisms of Abe's election, calling for the new Japanese government to take steps to improve relations.

"China is a very important country for Japan, and China's development is a plus also for Japan," Abe said. "I will work to further develop relations between Japan and China."

Abe's first test is setting up his Cabinet, the second during his term government with conservatives on every issue from the economy and foreign affairs to defense and women's rights. AP



WHAT'S INSIDE

- $300,000 bonus, rich rematches lured Pacquiao /A24

SPORTS

Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres

- Fil-Am gives up Asian Games swim berth/A26

Eagles seek title, weather permitting

WILL THE ATENEO BLUE EAGLES put away the UAAP championship crown tonight?

But if the classic Taraan Tigers ... or even the weather—spoil the celebrations.

The Eagles, who last won that title in 2002, will aim for a Finals sweep against the Tigers in Game 2 of the best-of-three series at 6 p.m. today at the Araneta Coliseum.

But in the event the inclement weather continues, the league will move Game 2 to another date. Classes have been suspended with typhoon Feliyan expected to hit Metro Manila today.

The league will make an announcement by 8 a.m. today according to UAAP secretary general Rene Saguisag.

Despite the brewing storm, the Eagles looked forward to ending the championship series by teaming up with some rain dancers.

"Our post defense still needs work," said Ateneo coach Norman Black even before rumored-ing the Eagles' brilliant 77-72 escape in Game 1 last Sunday.

CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES TODAY (Araneta Coliseum)
Game 2—UST vs FEU (Rescan Game 1)
2 p.m.—Miami vs FEU (As Game 3)
3:30 p.m.—Recording Commission vs ADU (As Game 2)

Instead, the Eagles expanded on the lead they had built in the first half, leading by as much as 15 points, 58-43, with 6:30 left in the third period.

But before the Eagles' supposed to the dance, the Tigers mounted a furious rally, capped by Jeff Gonzalez' three-point play that gave UST its first lead, 72-71, with 1:07 to go.

"The game was everything we expected and more," said Black after the game. "We knew it will be a tough season."

Despite the crushing loss, coach Pido Jarencio said the Tigers are determined to extend the series to a do-or-die match.

"Do still confident," said Jarencio. "We have

EAGLES /A24

ATENEO'S Macky Escalona completes a fastbreak off past Daniel of UST in Sunday's Game 1.

Cage row over as MVP elects to head SBP

PANGILINAN

DMSD /A24

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Location Map

$300,000 bonus, rich rematches lured Pacquiao

PACQUIAO—Unexpected bonus

A $300,000 (P15.4 MILLION) SIGNING bonus plus multimillion-dollar purses from prestige matches with Mexican fight icons Marco Antonio Barrera and Juan Manuel Marquez.

Those are just two of the most tempting packages Don La Hoya offered Filipino boxing superstar Manny Pacquiao to successfully entrust him over to fight under his Golden Boy Promotions.

De La Hoya revealed the deal to ESPN, in a report carried by the website sportsillustrated.com yesterday.

The signing bonus was totally unexpected, according to a source close to the camp of Pacquiao, whose reported asking price is in the six-digit range, or between $100,000 and $200,000 (P5.5 million to P11 million).

Actually told ESPN's Dan Rafael on Monday that Pacquiao decided to expand his fight repertoire upon meeting with Top Rank chairman Bob Arum and Golden Boy Promotions president Richard Schaefer in Los Angeles, California.

Pacquiao now weighs 130 lb. as per his pounds over the super bantamweight limit of 130, the contract weight for his 12-round decision over Medgoen.

In an interview with FHMboxing.com, Arum said he has been working for the details of the superfight De La Hoya-Pacquiao assistant before taking legal action.

Golden Boy has not yet made statement with our assistant," Arum said Monday.

The reported Arum legal response arrived but not ratified Pacquiao, according to the FH interview Arum with the Boxing WRAP Card Date

Athletics clinch AL West crown

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON—THE OAKLAND ATHLETICS pounded the Seattle Mariners, 13-5, here Tuesday to seal the American League West division title.

Milton Bradley had a three-run homer and Jay Payton and Jason Kendall had four hits apiece as the 93-game-old Athletics kept hitting streak, including a three-game, 19-9 loss to KC-leading to the Mariners on Monday in which closer Huston Street wouldn't hold a three-run lead in the ninth.

With the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim losing 5-2to the Texas Rangers just minutes earlier, the Athletics could celebrate when Chad Cordero retired Ron Gardenhire on a fly ball to right field for the final out.

The Athletics have seven 14 A's Nine crowns, the third most division title in the major leagues, behind the Yankees Braves (21) and the New York Yankees, who wrapped up their 15th title last Wednesday.

After their condensed skirmishes, Oakland put on their patented late-season rush. The Athletics were 24-29 at the end of May, but owned 87-37 mark, the second-best record in baseball behind the playoff-bound Minnesota Twins.

Bradley's three-run homer off Jake Woods was the big blow in a four-run second inning that gave the A's a 5-0 advantage.

That would prove to be plenty for Rich Harden, who was making just his second start since June 4. AFP

NEW York Yankees' Gary Sheffield (right) is tagged out in a rundown between first and second base by Baltimore Orioles' first baseman Kevin Millar. REUTERS

SPORTSWATCH

Bukidnon, Maguindanao win

BUKIDNON FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION and Maguindanao-Cotabato City Football Association qualified to the FFA (Philippine Football Federation) under-19 Mindanao playoffs by topping their respective regional group eliminations recently. Headed by Del Monte's Ramon Mendoza, BUFA entered teams from Sumilao and Cagayan de Oro under Carlo Sison and MACOTAMA (6 wins over teams from Sultan Kudarat, South Cotabato and North Cotabato) in Week-four respective campaigns yesterday.

RP darters hit target

THE PHILIPPINE DARTS TEAM TOPPED THE 16-unit Asia Pacific Cup 2006 held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Composed of Lourdes Ilagan, Bobby Concepcion, Sunee Stevens, Jojo Gabriles, Rose Rubio and Armando Avelan, Team Pilipinas now defending champion New Zealand in the semifinals and Singapore/Malaysia in the finals of the event which lured 30 countries.

Stag Festival today

ARCHERY KING CORONET IS EXPECTED AT THE "CORE" event Kalayaan Mega Cockpit today as the second round of the Stag Festival's 1-day derby fires off at 6 p.m. with 25 fights programmed. Thirteen cockers tallied two wins each on Tuesday's opening round: Dennis Yocon, Rolando Rosa, Michael Fallado, Frank Malagueño, Jimel Fresarra, Reggie Bulang, Tony Jaro, Mark Cayanan, Edgar Ruiz, PJ Quesada and Eusebio Jr. and San Jose La Union entries.

No entry fee in Laboton

THE 2006 LABOTON ECAS 10 BOWLING with no entry fee expected to be staged in 12 cockpits nationwide this month and October. A participant could bring proof of purchase worth P1,000 of Sagupan Corvalence 2000 or other Sagupan products. Among the participating cockpits are: San Juan Coliseum, Pasig Green Garden, Pasay City Cockpit, Bonanza Coliseum, Tuao Mega Cockpit, Solana Cockpit, Aguas Cockpit, Norgas Cockpit, Luna Cockpit, San Manuel Cockpit, Gallery de Manzanas, Mendiola Entertainment Center and Strada Arena. For info, call ENDAYA (date) or (02) 1 - 8282 (Mr/Ms).

La Pilas cockfest up

MAD PACES ACTION STARTS AT 9 A.M. TODAY at La Pilas Coliseum's Festival Mini. Joe Cock Enterprises will move their 6th cockers meet up. Hosts Jessie Nieva and Willie Perrella said that weigh-in at noon will be held from 7-9 a.m. The limited win champion and second placer, who will be declared after every ten fights, shall receive P35,000 and one sack of rice respectively. Entry fee is P1,000.

Nowitzki signs $60M contract

DALLAS—DIRK NOWITZKI IS STAYING with the Dallas Mavericks at least through the 2010-11 NBA season.

A week before opening training camp, the Mavs made sure their superstar forward remains under contract for the next five seasons with a massive extension Tuesday.

Nowitzki, 28, already was signed for the upcoming season and had a $16 million (euro12.6-million) plan option for 2007-08 under the maximum contract he signed in 2003. The new deal guarantees that season, plus three more. He'll turn 33 the summer his new contract expires.

Terms of the deal were not released, but were likely right near the maximum a likely worth around $60 million (euro47.2 million).

Nowitzki finished third in most valuable player award voting each of the last two years. He subsequently led the Mavs to a 67-15 record, which was the best in franchise history. The Mavs took a 2-0 lead over the Miami Heat, finished in six games.

BYRON Nelson

Golf legend Nelson dies

DALLAS, TEXAS—HALL OF FAME golfer Byron Nelson, who won 18 tournaments in 1945 in the greatest single season in the game's history, died on Tuesday at the age of 94.

The Tarrant County Medical Examiner's office confirmed the death.

Nelson, who is survived by his wife of nearly 20 years, Peggy, died at his Texas ranch, an unnamed family friend told the Dallas Morning News.

Nelson's 1945 season also included 11 straight rounds in the 60s. In 1944-45, he won 31 of his 54 starts. AFP

Cañare, Gatchalian pace WC q'finalists

ADAM BOWLING HOMEBOOTH (Hong Kong leg) champion Jojo Cañare and veteran Jeanne Gatchalian rolled big games at Pinang's Midtown Lanes Tuesday to lead 14 others into the quarterfinals of the 2006 World Cup national finals in men and ladies.

Cañare fired 262, 255 and 226 in his second 30-game series to finish with 3651 pins and a 193.60 average and overtake Lisa del Rosario, who dropped to third at 3544 (187.26 average).

Gatchalian shot 279, 267, 263, 245, 228, 229 and 223 in score 3247 and average 216.43 after 26 games.

Gatchalian paced Hazel Hilomen (1991), Chester King (1987), Darng Nepomuceno (1982), RJ Hilomen (1971), Cj Guerra (1946), Edgar Ramirez (1900) and Herbert Ito (1898).

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Promo period: September 5-28, 2006

TOYOTA FINANCIAL SERVICES

TOYOTA moving forward

SPORTS

ACADEMIC pressure at Harvard forces Justin Pangilinan to quit from Philippine swim campaign

Fil-Am gives up AG slot

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PROSPECTS OF A BRIGHT PHILIPPINE SWIM campaign in the coming Asian Games dimmed further yesterday with the withdrawal of Fil-American top female bet Jackie Pangilinan due to her academic commitments at Harvard.

The Ateneo stint of the Southeast Asian Games silver winner Nangilinan, 20, has her in the treasure-minder tennis conflicts with her studies at the Ivy league school which grants her academic scholarship worth $40,000 annually.

Her dilemma was reported by her father Fleeman to the Philippine Amateur Swimming Association leadership recently.

"We have no choice but support Jackie in this for we will surely have her fighting for the gold in the 2007 SEA Games and possibly earn a slot for the Beijing Olympics," said then president Mark Joseph.

Long distances expert Miguel Mendoza, the NCAA 1,500-meter freestyle champ, has earlier called it quits after finishing his studies and landing a job in the United States where he was based for several years.

Athens Olympics veterans Tamsy Chua-Ann begged off to continue his engineering degree at the University of the Philippines, while backstroker ace Llova Hamka also backed out due to her school commitments, according to Joseph.

Left to spearhead the team in 2005 Seag meet outstanding athlete and now team captain Miguel Molina, who won three gold last year. Seag silver winner Erica Sotto is co-captain of the women's team.

"Our Asiad team is a mix of old and new, including up and coming Olympic potentials," said Joseph. "The Doha Games will be tough but we will be there. And don't discount the possibility of a good performance from swimming's Generation Next."

He was referring to former age-group champions in the 10" years—Abdiel Gandiongon, Ryan Andrejo, Ernest Dy, Daniel Bordado and Filoi world champ-sembly swimmer Kristoffer Uy and FE-Am Daniel Coakley.

The Philippines last won a swim medal in the Asiad in 1998 with Ryan Arao securing two bronzes in the 100m and 200m backstroke.

Legazpi Milo leg kicks off Sunday

THE 30TH NATIONAL MILO MARATHON visits the Bicol region for the second time this year with Legazpi City as host on Sunday.

Because of its unprecedented undertaking of hosting 50 legs all over the country in its 30th year, the Milo Marathon holds two of these extravaganza events in a region. And Bicol is recipient of legs—in Naga City last leg, hosted Legazpi.

Like in the Naga City leg held last August where first-time 21.6 competitor Antonio Hallal Jr. stole the limelight from his more seasoned rivals, young runners from different capital city are expected to prove themselves and qualify for the 42K national finals Oct. 29 in Metro Manila.

More than 4,000 runners are expected to join the 21K elimination race, 5K fun run and kiddies 2K age group event.

The event is in partnership with Bayview Park Hotel Manila, Adidas, Cebu Pacific, Department of Tourism and Embarc is being supported by the provincial and city government of Albay with support from the Legazpi Airport and the PAFP is being coordinated by Antonio Bustamante for the province of Albay and Leo Selle for the city.

Alcano, 3 others unscathed

BEIJING, MANILA SOUTHEAST Asian Games double gold medalist Rosario Alcano passed two straight wins to one three other Filipino pool wizards into the second round of the 2006 US Open 9-Ball championships Tuesday at the Minneapolis Convention Center in Minneapolis, Virginia.

However, defending champion Alex Pagulayan and 2005 SEA-Games 9-ball titlist Dingginoy Ong winner Gandy Valle dropped their respective matches in the second round, Pagulayan bowed to Tyler Foley while Valle yielded to Chris Barnes by double 11-8 scores.

The 34-year-old Alcano beat Jimmy Gates, 11-4, and Adam Smith, 11-1, both from the United States, respectively.

Efrén Reyes 9-ball titlist Edwin Ing winner Rodolfo Luat, 2005 Shine 9ball Bacoly champion Junino Jumbaan and Filipino pool legend Ano "Amang" Portes also posted their second-round wins.

ROMATO. Rizano Rijo for success in the US pool circuit.

Lee and Santiagos, who dismiss in the first round, routed Rodne Hall, 11-5, and Timmy Hall, 11-3, in that order.

The 34-year-old Bicol, acknowledged leader of the Filipino invasion in the US pool circuit in the mid '90s, thrashed Ong, 11-3, and Hall-round Cisneros, 11-5.

Alcano, the 2002 AG Billiards Bankin of the Year, will face Marcus Chamat of Sweden in the next round. After getting a bye in the first round, Chamat stopped the winning ways of Cambodia's second Jimmy Kikuchi Mistral, 11-4, in the second round.

Luat, Jumbaan and Portes will face Bob Brandenburg, Charles Ahrmann and Joey Tenorio the next round.

"Bonnie (Alcano) has the capacity to do well in the US Open since he has proven his worth not only in Asia but also in the US pool circuit," said businessman Perry Mariñas, who is supporting Valle and several other pool players. Marlon Bernardino

The secret behind Bata Reyes' magic

FIVE DAYS AFTER, people are still talking about that miraculous last-second finish of the Ateneo Blue Eagles in Game One of the UAAP best-of-three championship series at the Araneta Coliseum.

Undeterred by memory is threatening, I dare remember seeing anything like it in the last three decades. Neither does UAAP commissioner Abner Vargas.

But NCAA commissioner Jun Bernardino, knowing the feat was not that rare, He said he has seen it three times locally and internationally a number of times.

For Ateneo coach Norman Black, it was deja vu. He experienced the same scenario years ago back in high school.

* * *

When the UST Tigers contented with a second left to make the lead by one, everyone believed the game was over. I says Ateneo guitarist Manny Pangilinan slump on his seat and still in resignation as the UST bench rejoiced.

Indeed, what could happen in a second?

Well Ong-near-impossible did. It entered Dion a scene from the movie. The final free period, scuffling labourder Marby Baldoza to make a closer pass to the wider open Doug Gaston.

Following the impossible shot, the stunned gallery scene silent, while the UST bench and their team was mesmerized to react.

Even Bata Reyes knew his supreme governor who doesn't allow time and fortune to get in his head.

We bumped into Bata during the Color launch of Basketball Television at the New World Hotel summer Hotel in Makati last Monday. Unlike Manny Pangilinan, he didn't have a plethora of words, short, close in security and fanspot exasperated him.

But that families, northern stalk, the humble demeanor are still there.

* * *

Bata said he continues to observe the practice of not taking a bath during a best basketball competition in the UAAP.

"Isabi kasi ng mga coaches nila sa amin, wag aligaan daw ako na nagbibigay ng galing. Ang mga ako during a tournament, bawal manamit para galing. Ayun nila, habang buhay kong sinusubaybayan ang aligaan na ito, kahit sa mga susunod ako, "Bata said.

The team spoke tagged "The Magician" is now 32 years old. He started playing billiards when he was only 6, which means he has been playing the game for 44 years.

Bata intends to become part of the millions of years he won from the UST 8-ball World Pool Championship to a poultry business. He also plans to build a house for his son.

* * *

Just as the name of the new hotel channel implies, marketing manager Jude Turnaro said basketball television or DTV will be typically basketball channel, honored by the NBA games.

Aside from the NBA games, we will also air other international and local tournaments, including cage news and features, anything significant about basketball, as well as," Jude said.

Solar is covering the Asian Games in Doha, Qatar, this December, in cooperation with SBS-A. Jude is hoping we can still send a basketball team to compete in their next meet.

* * *

SCOOPING. Jun Bernardino had to watch last Sunday's Ateneo-UST game standing. Elmer Yanga had given him a seat at commissioner's row, from where he watched the juniors' game, but when he left after the match-up, he found his reserved seat taken. It also turned to retrieve the seat but he had no ticket to show. The new occupant had a ticket... Hmmm, I wonder who has been selling tickets to the commissioner's row... Unofficial counting: Gms are napping in the newly formed Semi-Pro Basketball Org (SBO) as they have set their executive positions. Among those nominated for the post of executive director are Chito Narvasa, Elmer Yanga, Ed Cordero and Freddie Lim.

Northwoods, Sherwood gain edge

CAGAYAN (Misa Law-Iron Foam)

Group 1. Dilaud 9-13 (3-7) Jamil Illo 4-10-9; Lastrigo 2-2-3-5 Mark Hart 2-4-4-5, Dino 0-0-0-0. Group 2. Dimacuti 4lo 1-0-0-2; Northwoods 2-1-1-5, Lanuza 2-0-0-4, Tan 2-2-2-6, Tubig 0-4-0-4, Ng Quia 1-3-1-5 Group 3. Northwoods 4-1-2-13, Antonio 2-2-2-5, Cardoning 2-2-1-5, Agbayani 1-2-4-6, Edi Mabuza 2-4-1-5.

FORMER CHAMPION ROYAL NORTH-woods and Sherwood Hills gained the edge in the eight-race first round of the inaugural semifinal duos after the penultimate day of eliminations in the Federation Golf League recently.

Northwoods dumped Cauayan, 2-3-3, in race a format point and Dr. Sherwood Hills for the league leadership at 11 points going into their final elimination games this weekend.

Traveling all the way to Baguio, Sherwood's Ed se-olanda are outright seven birds was stalled after obtaining only a 2-2 draw with sister team Camp John Hay.

Two other teams, defending champion Green Hills and Manila Southwoods, still have a shot at the outright semifinal berth as they closed the first round behind the leaders with one game left.

Rosen Hills was travellers against Black Wash in a home game, taking a home point with a 3-3-3 victory.

Crystal gained this weekend get Sherwood against Valley, Southwoods versus Camp John Hay host Hills against one-of-the-running Santiago and Northwoods versus Cauayan.

The results of these matches will determine the pairings/seedings for the playoff rounds.

Overshadowed by the close race for the semis slots was the 3.5-.5 victory of Orchard over Riviera and Elvira Inn Cebu's Cagayan Valley.

Tagaytay Highlands and CDC Midtown also wrapped up their series with a 2-1 draw.

Montana joins NBC

MONTANA ENGINEERS Angels, has joined the ongoing Spring Cooking Oil-NBC Negrosanal Cup basketball tournament.

Owned by businessman Armando Quilbod and supported by Dipet City Mayor Ananias Lubasa, Montana recently finished in sixty into the country's premier regional cagefest in meeting with NBC secretary general Tito Palma.

"I'm looking forward to developing and hosting more talents through the NBC and at the same time get maximum exposure for my company in the province," said Quilbod.

NBC president Herbert "Tito" Padilla and his PVF Tagaytay City Mayor Dennis Chiongbian endorsed the entry of Montana. "We (Antonio) Quilbod and his team will definitely give a big boost to NBC. Montana has been competing in basketball, particularly the PBL, for many years now," Padilla and Tiongbian said.

Coached by Jong Cagunggang and his assistant, Boy Tipe, Montana will be hampered by best talents Christopher James, Arnaiz Arabbaton, Lyndon Arabbaton, Jeff Bacaro, Ronald Lamorbo, Jona Ilan Edrinal, Mark Bonifacio and Randy Pascero.

Montana will three other teams—Bamboo Fortress Construction Auto, Cebuar Construction and Chancellor/John—have set to make their debut in the tourney sponsored by Salpicio Lines, Spring Cooking Oil, Nature's Spring, Molino, Holiday Plaza Hotel-Lotte and Prime Chemical. Superior Spring Oil is the early leader with three straight wins.

MVBA leg opens Oct. 1 at Xavier

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—THE SECOND CONFERENCE of the Mindanao-Visayas Basketball Association (MVBA) will hold its opening rites on Oct. 1 at the Xavier University Gym with league chair Gov. Oscar S. Moreno as host.

Formal installation fright when Governor Moreno's Misamis Oriental team visits expansion team Lanao del Norte of Gov. Imelda Q. Dimaporo at the elite student's Mindanao Civic Center in Tubod, Lanao del Norte on Oct. 3.

The other expansion teams are Bayawan City, Negros Oriental of Mayor Germaan F. Gustilo in the Visayas Division and the Dinoro-Dinoro Agdao of Mayor Rodrigo Duterte in the Mindanao Division—raising the MVBA membership to 12 teams.

According to Lanao Sur coach and provincial sports coordinator Sedam Sarako, the team will be composed of local athletes and a few players from nearby provinces plus 6-foot-6 center Jeff Mella of Marawi City.

Meanwhile, Coach Ben Tahiman will preside old hands Dondon Mendoza, Rami Tagupa and Jessie Mitchin plus new recruits Elliott Dumapit and Jerome Barbosa.

Jota drag racing Driver of the Year

ROSARIO, BATANGAS—BLANCHE Racing's Dave Jota saved his best for last, posting the crucial win and bagging the Drag Racing Driver of the Year award yesterday in the 2006 Red Horse National Drag Racing Championship Series at the Drag Strip of the Batangas Racing Circuit.

He didn't break the record time of 11.102 seconds, but his pacing was just perfect to outsmirk his engine and unleash his best performance on his final run in this event sanctioned by the Automobile Association Philippines.

Jota clocked 11.484 seconds in burning out Marvin Tecson of Team Ito on his first run, and posted 11.504 seconds in a semifinal showdown with arch rival and Team Ito driver Jonathan Ito in the semifinal round with a time of 11.264 seconds.

DRIVE. Jota flashes a victory smile.

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BUSINESS

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GSIS sells EPCIB stake for P8.7B

Accepts Sy's tender offer at P92 a share

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE STATE-OWNED GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE System (GSIS) yesterday signed a deal to sell its 12.7-percent stake in Equitable PCI Bank to the group of retail tycoon Henry Sy for P8.7 billion.

The sale of the GSIS block brings the SM group another step closer to its goal of taking over the country's third biggest bank and eventually merging it with its own banking arm, Banco De Oro Universal Bank.

In a statement, EPCIB president Winston Garcia said the state-owned pension fund would use the proceeds from the sale to increase lending to members and augment its investment portfolio.

The transaction involves 95 million common shares at P92 a share.

The SM group, the single biggest stockholder in EPCIB with a 34-percent stake, earlier made a tender offer to buy out all other shareholders at P92 a share—the same price demanded by the GSIS when it opposed SSS's earlier offer to merge with EPCIB.

The lender offer will lapse today, but EPCIB vice-chair Teresita Sy said the SM group would not know how much shares were tendered until later today.

The SM group needs to acquire 67 percent voting rights to merge EPCI and EPCIBank, whose consolidation could dislodge Bank of the Philippine Islands as the country's second largest bank.

Asiaciti Trust acquiring the GSIS stake, the Sys' investment arm SM Investments Corp. is also set to buy the 20.6-percent stake in EPCIB owned by EBC Investment Inc. valued at P7.25 billion. The EPCIB approved the sale of this block in compliance with an order from the Bangko Sentral

GMA 84

Time to go public for SMEs, family-owned companies

By Dimitri L. Lucas

MORE MANY PEOPLE SEE IT STILL FEEBLY to call it a bull run, the recent winning streak of the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) index may just be the start of an extended uptrend.

As such, the buoyant market sentiment may potentially benefit not only stock market investors but even small companies planning to raise funds to expand their businesses.

This and investment banker dynamic & Holmes who recently urged family-run firms to take advantage of recent market developments, including now having rules which allow companies to go public "the painless way."

"What we want to do is help family-run businesses, professionalize," he said in an interview. "Part of this process includes having stocks stock exchange."

Holmes is in charge of sound with accounting and consultancy firm Punongbayan & Araullo, which specializes in helping family-run firms develop their potential, whether they are small and medium enterprises (SMEs) or large corporations.

In a presentation before businessmen, he said he recognized the fact that not all family-run firms were ready to list on the stock exchange, but outlined the benefits of doing so.

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Currencies

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

55.31 ×

As of p.m., Sept. 21, 2004

Stock Market

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

Day-to-day market report on Page B2

Shares close higher on strong Wall St. rally

DAILY PRICES (1.0000 E-4) percent higher yesterday, reviving the upbeat mood in Asian markets after strong gains overnight on Wall Street in most major bourse indices, dealers said.

They said the advance was also supported by quarter-end window dressing.

The composite index added 37.25 points to 1,906.74 after trading between 1,940.62 and 1,888.35. Gainers outnumbered losers 89 to 41, with 53 stocks unchanged.

Turnover was 1.34 billion shares worth P3.3 billion.

BMB 84

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Mindanao focuses on China

CHINA'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPment is arguably the most amazing economic success story of the past 25 years.

Started in 1978, with the Chinese government's market oriented reforms, China's economy has posted consistent growth, marked by booming exports and massive inflows of foreign investments.

Today, China's economy is the third largest in the world, next to the United States and Japan.

It is also the world's fourth biggest trading nation.

And believe it or not, early this year, China displaced the United States as the world's biggest holder of foreign exchange reserves with close to a trillion dollars in its vaults.

Dramatic reduction

Amid this exciting landscape of high speed economic expansion, poverty has been dramatically reduced from more than 50 percent in 1980 to only 8 percent in 2003 -- giving rise to a burgeoning middle class.

While China is already one of the world's most efficient producers of goods, with average trade surpluses of about $100 billion annually, it may also and likewise be the world's biggest consumer of goods, with hundreds of millions of people joining the ranks of the affluent.

Enough customers per the country of Chinese middle class of 200 million, and growing fast as economic development reaches out to the more populous Central and Northeast regions.

It is against this backdrop that Mindanao producers have drawn up a program to access the vast China market.

Since 2002, Mindanao producers have embarked on an aggressive campaign to promote Mindanao exports to China.

Commodities identified to export include those already shipped in the island, like fresh and processed fruits and vegetables, fresh and processed fish and high value seaweeds and carrageenan, rubber and other industrial crops including non-based products.

These products have been showcased in various exhibitions.

I remember heading the Mindanao delegation to China in 2002 for the Philippine Info Exhibit in Shanghai.

This was followed by the China Seafood Show in Qingdao in 2004 and the China Goods Fair in Shenzhen last October 2005.

Through the assistance of the USAID's *Growth with Equity in Mindanao (GEM)*, the Mindanao exporters were able to promote their products to the huge China market and meet up with prospective buyers and distributors.

More importantly, the trade shows updated them on emerging trends in product quality, packaging and consumer preferences, and enabled them to benchmark their products against competition.

Joji Nagano-Blanco

Trade shows

Just recently, the GEM Program and the Department of Agriculture (DA) jointly organized a Mindanao delegation to the China World of Food Exhibition in Shanghai, one of the biggest international food shows in China and a maiden show of the prestigious Anuga fair held annually in Germany.

The Mindanao delegation was composed of 17 companies, mostly small and medium scale firms engaged in fruits, fish and other foods.

The best-sellers during the Shanghai Exhibition were banana chips, processed mango, boneless milkfish and coco based products.

According to some Mindanao exhibitors, (tropical fruits—whether fresh or processed—are in great demand in Shanghai, a highly urbanized region of China with the highest per capita consumption of imported fruits and vegetables.

Shanghai is also the home of the biggest expat non-community in China.

This explains the surprisingly high turnover in limited sardines. Chinese residents traditionally prefer live fish over frozen and processed fish products.

Beyond the trade exhibits, Mindanao producers are also meeting to resolve important trade-related issues.

The strong lobby of Mindanao producers groups, like the Mindanao Coconut Council and the Southern Mindanao Agricultural Council, usually negotiated with the China state government counterparts (and cheaper) quarantine protocols for the shipment of fresh mangoes into the mainland, lowering the barrier to entry.

China is fast becoming an important export market for Philippine fresh mangoes.

Shipments of fresh mangoes to China rose more than twenty times from a measly 134 metric tons in 2001 to 2,800 MT in 2003, a clear indication of the growing Chinese preference for the sweet tasting Philippine carabao mango.

Philippine mango has also entered in preferential (for Central and Northern Region, albeit in limited quantities.

Overall growth prospects for mango exports to China remain very high and final supply might be the only limiting factor for expansion.

Other prevailing developments also augur well for expanding trade with China.

Early this year, the full implementation of the Philippines-China Early Harvest Program (EHP) started.

The EHP is another positive factor for the growth agri-based exports to China as tariffs on the trading of fresh and semi-processed agricultural products have been effectively removed.

Numerous products, such as fresh bonus including banana, pineapple, mango and papaya as well as fish like tuna, are covered in the EHP and will therefore enjoy zero tariffs in the China market.

Lastly, but more importantly is the latest ties between Philippines and China are warming up as the two countries recently marked 30 years of formal diplomatic relations.

Leaders of the two countries exchanged high-profile state visits to reinforce the landmark event, committing to bring existing bilateral relations to a "golden age of comprehensive cooperation and partnership."

Greater cooperation

Serious high on the cooperation list are agriculture and fisheries, tourism, energy, infrastructure and development financing.

The two countries' combined goal: To increase total bilateral trade from the present $13 billion to $18 billion in five years.

Mindanao, the Philippine's main agricultural producer, will definitely play an important role in this expanding bilateral economic partnership.

Joji Nagano-Blanco is a strong advocate for Mindanao; chair, Mindanao world foundation inc., convenor, world Chartist change Advocacy Commission member; chair of the Mindanao PEO, Mindanao dep. Export Development Council; chair, Joji Blanco Foundation; former chair of the Mindanao Business Council. Email comments to jojiblanco@yahoo.com

Time to go public for SMEs, family-owned firms

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and while the process of listing a firm's shares on the stock market used to be a daunting and expensive exercise, new rules put in place by the PSE have simplified and shortened the process, and perhaps more importantly made it more affordable to smaller firms.

New reasons for listing

One such reform is called "listing by way of introduction."

Simply put, this scheme developed by the PSE allows a firm to list its shares on the exchange without having to float or sell new or existing shares to the public.

For tightly held, family-run companies, this implication of the definition are tremendous.

"This is very important for owners who don't want to sell their holdings diluted or for those who don't want to be threatened by outside buyers," Herbosa said.

The investment banker explained that this was especially relevant in the Philippine setting, and also gives a new twist to the whole concept of listing shares on the stock exchange.

"Philippine listing bonds has traditionally been the main rationale for going on an initial public offering (IPO), more and more companies are raising this route even though they have no need for fresh cash.

Take the example of mall tycoon Henry Sy's SM Investments Corp. or Lucio Tan's Empire East Holdings. Both tycoons are cash rich and have no need to tap the capital market for money but they did for their shares on the exchange. Why?

"From our planning of our aspect of this operation," Herbosa said, explaining that family-run firms, whether big or small, may take advantage of the stock exchange for reducing their tax liabilities when ownership is passed on from one generation to another.

"Many family-owned firms list on the stock market but tax considerations now," he said.

Indeed, transferring shares from one generation to another by selling them would entail a 10 percent capital gains tax levy. Estate taxes are even better for assets over P10 million, with the taxman levying P1.1 million plus 20 percent of everything in excess of P10 million.

"If you're listed, all you have to pay is a transaction tax of one-fourth of one percent plus VAT (value added tax)," Herbosa said.

Easier access to credit

Apart from tax considerations, there are also other advantages for firms to list, according to the PSE.

Shareholder goodwill is increased as buying and selling of company shares become easier.

"This is very prevalent for capital markets developments Mobilbar C. Guerrero said. "The visibility of market performance is also enhanced."

For companies which do need money, on the other hand, he explained that listing on the stock exchange often enhances their access to credit, especially because investors like banks or buyers of their debt paper will have an easier way of valuing the firm.

"If the market value of the company's equity is at a premium over book value, creditors will be persuaded to lend more," he said.

Guerrero explained that small companies that have big plans may also leverage their listing on the stock exchange for their future growth, especially if owners have their eye on buying or merging with other firms.

"It will be easier by mergers since the market price is established," he said, referring to the daily closing price of listed firms which is the main gauge for valuing the entire company.

At the same time, listed firms are also covered in greater detail by the media which usually report on "market sensitive" news.

"The financial press carries the full details of listed trading so shareholders can easily follow transactions and quotations, while unlisted companies are reported in less detail," he said.

Timing is key

Deregulation's thirteen points out, however, that timing was very important when a company first in shares on the exchange, whether it is a large corporation or a family-run business.

Historically, most firms choose to go public during a stock market bull run so they can demand a higher premium for the shares they sell.

While PSE's "listing by introduction" scheme, however, this loss points out that a company can already join the stock exchange while waiting for the opportune time to capitalize on listed trading opportunities.

He explained that it would be easier for a company to eventually sell shares to the public if it has already gotten the formalities of listing out of the way early on.

"Listing by way of introduction makes a company ready to take advantage of an upturn," he said.

So when is the right time?

"The time to go public will be within the next two years," Herbosa surprised, noting that more and more people have idle savings looking for better returns.

"There is money in the chest waiting to be invested in companies that will go IPO," he said, adding that the key drivers remain at present for a prolonged bull market until 2006.

For family-run businesses and SMEs, such a window may not open again for a long time.

Half a million OFWs joined SSS, contributed $854M as of end -'05

By Doris C. Dumlao

OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS (OFWs) with the state-owned Social Security System (SSS) recorded the 500,000 mark, contributing $854 million in membership dues to the pension fund.

In a statement yesterday, the SSS, which wants the government to require OFWs to register as members of the pension fund prior to their departure, announced that its total OFW membership reached 515,000 as of end-2005 compared to only about 55,000 in 1995. Total contributions during the period also surged from the $95 million level as of 1995.

But despite the increase in the OFW membership with the state-owned pension fund, this still represented a small fraction of the total Filipino population working abroad. Used to underestimate the number of Filipinos in more than 190 countries is eight million, which comprise 20 percent of the total productive labor force of the country.

At least 4.9 million of these OFWs are migrant workers who have specific contracts and have no proper documentation.

SSS president and CEO Corazon dela Paz said they target 5% of the OFW members now in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Brunei and oil-rich countries such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

"The increased enrollment of OFWs with the SSS reflects our renewed efforts to provide social security protection to our overseas workers," Dela Paz said.

Vice President Noli de Castro earlier encouraged the SSS to intensify its social security programs for OFWs.

He cited the Flexi-fund, a tax-exempt savings and pension plan, which is on top of the regular social security programs offered by the institution. About 14,000 are enrolled in the Flexi fund.

De Castro said the recent conflict in Lebanon highlighted the needs of OFWs and urged SSS as one of the GSIS government agencies to respond to the call to provide social security protection to the sector.

He also lauded the SSS efforts to ensure its inward social security agreements with countries that surplus a substantial number of Filipino workers in addition to existing agreements with Australia, the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland, Spain, France, Canada and Quebec, Switzerland, Belgium and South Korea.

Gov't cuts local borrowing plan

THE BUREAU OF THE TREASURY (BTr) slashed its local borrowing program for the year by 12 percent to P270.9 billion from the original ceiling of P310.2 billion, taking advantage of recent gains from the government's fiscal reforms.

Secretary Turner Jesus Cruz announced yesterday that the agency would offer as much treasury bills and bonds in the fourth quarter as was raised through local auctions in the third quarter in line with the government's strategy of reducing its foreign debts.

Aside from reducing the full-year local securities issuance, the fourth quarter program would cut the year's borrowings through treasury auctions by 37 percent from P422.8 billion in 2005.

"The borrowing program for the quarter is consistent with the fiscal program and improvement achieved by the government and with its debt strategy of moving away from foreign to domestic borrowing," Cruz said.

This is seen bringing the government's borrowing mix to 42:58 in terms of foreign to domestic debt ratio.

The government is also set to vindicate at the end of this month the interim of buying back about $264 million worth of remaining Brady bonds. Cruz said in a recent interview at the sidelines of the International Monetary Fund-World Bank meetings in Singapore.

The Brady bonds were named after Nicholas Brady, the Treasury chief of the United States during the time of President Ronald Reagan who proposed the issuance of these debt paper to help heavily indebted countries like the Philippines even secure their outstanding bank debt starting in the 1980s.

These old bonds have become more expensive compared to current global bond floats as interest rate spreads tightened over the years following improvements in the government's fiscal position.

Meanwhile, Cruz admitted that the credit of the Philippine sovereign's latest offshore bond exchange was disappointing for some investors. Out of the nearly $12 billion worth of short- and medium-term government debt notes on offer, only $5 billion was taken out and swapped with $5.2 billion in fresh IOUs.

"Those people who were greedy and sidelined it at more upside, guess ended picking those up in the secondary market at worse terms," he explained.

"They assumed that we will go the Columbia way...that we would pay up. But they should know the (Philippine government IOUs) better. We never pay up because the deal's due to our the measure of success."

In finance, to "pay up" means to accept less in cash coming from a swap into higher priced bonds.

Doris C. Dumlao

Listed firms raised P31.5B from market in first 8 months

Growth prospects whet investor appetite for stocks

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

LISTED COMPANIES RAISED SOME P31.5 billion in fresh capital in the first eight months of the year through initial public offerings, sales of additional shares and stock rights offering, Philippine Stock Exchange data showed.

The amount was, however, lower than year-ago's P50.5 billion, which was boosted by the IPOs held by Manila Water Corp. of the Ayala group and SM Investments Corp. of Henry Sy.

For this year, the bulk of the capital raised came from the IPOs held by power producer First Generation Corp. (PF 1 billion), snack foods maker Universal Robina Corp. (P4.8 billion primary offer only), Megaworld Corp. (P5.6 billion) and property developer Cebu Land (P1.58 million), as well as from Rizal Corp.'s preferred shares offering (P1.6 billion).

The 8-month data does not include the P222 million generated by Absolut Equity Investors from the sale of its treasury shares last week.

Expectations of a stronger economic growth—propped up by the peso appreciation and the softening of interest rates—whetted investor appetite for stocks, market analysts said.

"It's good timing and good companies," Joseph Sinas, president at Eagle Equities said.

Secondary offers or the sale of shares owned by existing shareholders from January to August amounted to P6.2 billion. Of the amount, Megaworld accounted for P583 million while the balance was raised by URC.

The record does not reflect yet the sale last week by the Zobel family's holding firm Mermac Inc. of its 67.9 percent stake in Ayala Corp. which fetched P18.6 billion.

For the whole year of 2005, secondary offerings raised a total of P1.3 billion.

"Investors are bullish on the prospects of local stocks in the next 12 months. Secondary offerings, like the recent ones, offer value since they are priced at a significant discount to the current market price," Vical Joseph Guzon, SEC Investment Management chief economist officer in the Philippines, said.

GSIS sells ... From page B1

ng Filipinas

Garcia said the GSIS would continue to invest in government securities.

"We will also hire private fund managers to help run our investment portfolio," Garcia said.

The GSIS and others who will accept SM's offer, the lips instead to pay 10 percent of the total price on Dec. 2, another 30 percent on June 2, 2007, another 10 percent on Feb. 2, 2008, and the remaining 70 percent on Oct. 2, 2008.

If compared against one percent value, the SM group's offer amounts to about P88 a share based on an assumed two-year bond yield of 6 percent.

It merger between BPI/BE and BOG will create the country's second biggest banking group with combined assets of P928.6 billion (excluding Ortiz Banking Corp.), next to Metrobank Card Bank and Trust Co.'s consolidated assets of P934 billion.

Shares ... From page B1

"The positive sentiment on Wall Street spilled over into Asian markets this morning," said Mike Literman of Globe Investment Asia.

This has lessened optimism that the Philippine market will overtake its rally.

"The economic fundamentals are sound. The peso is stable. I think the market is now gathering momentum before re-testing the key resistance level of 1,600 points," said Javier Lia of Banahaw Securities Inc.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., the most actively traded stock, rose P33 to P3,270, reaching gains in its New York listed shares.

Conglomerate SM Investments Corp. advanced P1 to P350 and rival Banco de Oro jumped P1.50 to a record P40 amid growing hopes that the banks will be merged with rival Equitable PCI Bank. AFP

Escalation clues

WAS IT GOOD OR WAS IT BAD FOR THE STOCKS?

I refer to all that fun in the hallowed chambers, featuring the headline-grabbing arrest warrants for PCGG officials, for example.

The Senate issued them in connection with its inquiry—well, "in aid of legislation," of course—into the internal affairs of the sequestered Philcomsat group.

The group only happened to be holding in 2004 part of nearly a hundreds investment among the belligerent stockholders.

In effect, one group of stockholders was accusing another group of "misuse" of corporate funds, which one court case after another flying all over the place.

Leading the attack were Victor Africa and friends. Danilo Ildefonso, whose group took over two corporations called PCITC and Philcomsat about six years ago.

On the defensive side was supposedly the camp of government nominees in the board of another company called Philcomsat Holdings Corp. or PHC.

But whatever reason, the Senate committee on government corporations and public enterprise, headed by Sen. Richard Gordon, saw it fit to look into the matter.

According to media reports, the Senate inquiry "in aid of legislation" has escalated to a constitutional crisis. Who had sent the cases to court and engendered strife? Mish?

To think, as proof of the "misuse" of funds, the senators initially hinged their call for an investigation on "cars" that the company illegally bought for board members.

It's not as if the Senate thinks that it's futile to investigate corporations that buy cars for its officers and directors, the world will end the next day.

But all governments outfits buy cars, short Jet planes, agreed, are something else. Don't you think, hearing, we have many other problems in this country?

Some have it my homepage, the guys could not just accept the "car issue" as the be-all and-end-all of the investigation, and there could only be something else.

Taking a high profile in the Senate hearing, guess was Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile or JPE, who already threatened PCGG officials with libel cases for saying that he had "vested interests" in the Philcomsat group.

JPE insisted that the stake of his daughter, Katrina, in the Philcomsat group had nothing to do with his fight to end corruption in Philcomsat.

I guess I can live with JPE's explanation, although I don't think that it sits well with the group of stockholders in the Philcomsat group because JPE—in fact—is an original incorporator of the business group under the Marcos dictatorship.

Today's holdings of Katrina Ponce Enrile, who now heads the Jaka conglomerate of the Enrile family, are the same holdings of JPE during martial rule.

Precisely because of such an irregular circumstance, which in my book is an obvious conflict of interest, JPE volunteered to exhibit himself from the Senate investigation.

Yet the good senator could not keep his mouth as his committee hearings became committee chair Gordon the questioning of the witnesses in a covers hearing.

As a dire to further escalation of the word war, word goes around that certain board directors are filing a complaint against JPE before the Senate ethics committee.

BREAKTIME

Conrrado B. Bautista III

In other words, this whole mess is not about to end. It so happens that the Senate is only the highest policy-making body in this country with millions of problems.

It think, several cases between the warring stockholders have been filed in the Court of Appeals and the Sandiganbayan, and even the Supreme Court.

And so the Senate hearings will go on displacing the court hearings on the ongoing mess involving, precisely, the same Philcomsat group.

How pleasing is that to the public, considering that not a few of the guys down here in my homeroom already think of the Senate as an expensive circus?

• • •

RECEIPTS: the BCDA held a public bidding for some 12.5 hectares of prime land, which was nicknamed "Big Dollz," at the fast-developing high-end area in Metro Manila called Bonifacio Global City.

As such, you would think that real estate companies would fall over each other, rushing to bid for such a rare lot property at the Fort Thing again?

Word has it that, out of the 11 top real estate companies that bought the "terms of reference" for the bidding, the BCDA got a total of zero bids.

For that kind of property, nobody is biting, even at a time when real estate is said to be moving up?

What's more, the BCDA public information office brushed the whole thing away as nothing to do with the raging issue on this row of administration officials and military troops to take over the airports as Fort Pointe from the private contractor.

If that were true, how come the BCDA was trying to set up a Ph.5-million PR campaign?

Reports have it that BCDA were trying to woo, from the Palace that the "controversies that" said would have little impact on investor confidence.

Sure, except that one German group already postponed its investments, pointing at the Fort Pointe incident as the cause.

For what were the message of the Fort Ortiz story to business in general?

Well, under this true administration, if the government wants to take your business, whether you like it or not, the government will just send the troops, period.

• • •

LAST PEEK, the Depbid launched a new wrinkle of the "adopt a school" program.

The new program basically offers "packages" to the private sector—i.e. the various foundations of those tycoons—in such areas of education as infrastructure, teacher training, support to students, computer learning, and books.

In other words, instead of the business people having to rack their brains in some up-with-people for the school system, the Depbid now has a "menu" from which the donors can choose.

It is much more simple for the donors. You know—less work for an equal savings in tax payments!

LRWC ups stake in gaming firm

BENGO CONGLOMERATE LEISURE AND RESORTS World Corp. has raised its stake in a Cagayan economic zone Internet gaming licensee to 69.7 percent from 55 percent.

LRWC told the Philippine Stock Exchange in a disclosure yesterday that it had completed the purchase of 31,250 shares of First Cagayan Leisure and Resort Corp. from holding firm Asiaworld Heights Inc. for P800 a share or P25 million.

First Cagayan has a license agreement with the Cagayan Economic Zone Authority (Cezo) to develop, operate and conduct Internet and gaming enterprises and facilities in the Cagayan Special Economic Zone Freeport (CSEZFP).

In view of this license agreement, First Cagayan was issued a master license certificate, which authorizes it to regulate and monitor the licensing and operation of Internet gaming in the zone.

As of Dec. 31, 2005, First Cagayan has 15 licensed locations, of which six Internet gaming licenses are already operating.

In a related development, LRWC's wholly-owned subsidiary All Leisure Esperanza Inc. has approved the purchase of 800 pesos or 8,000 shares of a single parlor operator in the Greenhills Shopping Center in Ortigas City.

The acquisition of 50 Amusement and Recreation Corp. is in line with ALI's drive to set up Bingo-barrigas nationwide. Elizabeth L. Sanchez

RFM beefing up funds for expansion

FOOD AND BEVERAGE FIRM RFM CORP. WILL raise up to P500 million in fresh cash possibly through borrowings and equity infusion, RFM president Jose Mo. Concepcion III said after the company's stockholders' meeting yesterday.

Concepcion said RFM was in talks with First Metro Investment Corp. (FMIC) to take the lead in determining ways to go about the proposed fund-raising exercise.

The amounts to be raised will be used to finance ongoing capital expenditure, and sales and marketing activities.

RFM said that in the first eight months, it posted a net income of P139 million, up from P39 million last year. Gross profit margin—the ratio less the cost of goods sold—grew by 23 percent during the period.

Last year, RFM posted a net income of P168 million, a reversal of the P427 million in losses in the previous year, after cutting down expenses and writing down investments to its affiliate Swift Foods.

In the meantime, the company launched last week its ready-to-bake filled milk product in its two packs, the first of this kind in the market.

Marketed as a "growing up" milk, the first-filled milk comes in three affordable sizes: 150 milliliters (P6.85), 250 ml (P12.50) and 1 liter (P45).

RFM introduced in 2005 products that helped strengthen its brands such as Swift all Meat Brown hotdogs, Swift Juicy Corned Beef in foil packs, and an improved Swift Corned Sliced. RFM's branded food business contributes 41.2 percent of total sales.

The company also produces and sells Hotty pans, Whole Wing flour mixes, ready-to-drink bubble juice and tea, Swift processed and canned meats and Selecta ice cream in a joint venture with the Dairymen Group. Elizabeth L. Sanchez

DISCLOSURES

MIPTOMIL Resources Inc. will hold a special stockholders' meeting on Nov. 14, 1:0 p.m. at the Manila Golf and Country Club in Forbes Park, Makati.

• • •

LAWYER Oscar B. Serrano was named corporate secretary of **Union Equities Inc.**, replacing Antonio A. Pizzio, who resigned effective Oct. 7.

• • •

Citi Holdings Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Nov. 10, 2:30 p.m. at the Legarda Building in Makati City.

• • •

RUBEN O. Fruto has been elected vice president in charge of **Security Bank Corp.**'s corporate relationship group effective Nov. 7. **Computer by Aida Patricio, PDI Research**

People, Events & Products

Edsa Aries Espinosa

SuperFerry's Buy One Take One Fiesta Fare Promo

IN LINE WITH ITS ONGOING DISCount promos, leading shipping company SuperFerry is launching a latest offering – The Buy One Take One Fiesta Fare Promo for the Manila-Bacolod-Manila route (to support the Masskara Festival in Bacolod, the famous City of Smiles) and the Manila-Zamboanga-Manila route (to support the La Hermosa Festival in Zamboanga, the famous City of Flowers).

The selling period for the Masskara Festival is from Sept. 24 to 28, and the selling period from Oct. 11 to 13 only.

The selling period for the La Hermosa Festival is from Sept. 24 to 28, and the selling period from Oct. 11 to 15 only.

According to Andrew Bosco, AVP for marketing, "This promotional price is aligned with our objective of encouraging cost-effective travel during festivals or fiests, which we intend to do every month, year-round. This is in line with SuperFerry's continuous efforts in helping promote tourism by encouraging low-cost travel to different regions."

"Now, our passengers may choose to go back home to celebrate an important event in their hometown, via the Fiesta Promo, and avail of their return trip for free," he added. The promo, Dayo said, completes the cast of all seasonal fares, including cabin and stateroom.

As part of the Mandaluyong institution, SuperFerry will also hold the grand raffle draw of its Sakay Pesada Mega Pagwapas Raffle Promo for Manila-Bacolod travelers on Oct. 15, featuring one of the newest OPM bands in the country today – Parokya ni Edgar.

For more details, call SuperFerry hotline (632)528-7000 in Metro Manila, (034)435-4001 in Bacolod, (062)991-6119 in Zamboanga, or visit SuperFerry (MV Dona Josefa) at the Reception Hall of the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC), CCP Complex, Roxas Blvd., on Sunday, Nov. 28. For ticket reservations call Metro or Bicolano at the Cooperative: 845-6365 or 845-9140 or Lucena at 931-2228 or 731-2228 or 731-2229 or 731-2230 or 731-2231 or 731-2232 or 731-2233 or 731-2234 or 731-2235 or 731-2236 or 731-2237 or 731-2238 or 731-2239 or 731-2240 or 731-2241 or 731-2242 or 731-2243 or 731-2244 or 731-2245 or 731-2246 or 731-2247 or 731-2248 or 731-2249 or 731-2250 or 731-2251 or 731-2252 or 731-2253 or 731-2254 or 731-2255 or 731-2256 or 731-2257 or 731-2258 or 731-2259 or 731-2260 or 731-2261 or 731-2262 or 731-2263 or 731-2264 or 731-2265 or 731-2266 or 731-2267 or 731-2268 or 731-2269 or 731-2270 or 731-2271 or 731-2272 or 731-2273 or 731-2274 or 731-2275 or 731-2276 or 731-2277 or 731-2278 or 731-2279 or 731-2280 or 731-2281 or 731-2282 or 731-2283 or 731-2284 or 731-2285 or 731-2286 or 731-2287 or 731-2288 or 731-2289 or 731-2290 or 731-2291 or 731-2292 or 731-2293 or 731-2294 or 731-2295 or 731-2296 or 731-2297 or 731-2298 or 731-2299 or 731-2300 or 731-2301 or 731-2302 or 731-2303 or 731-2304 or 731-2305 or 731-2306 or 731-2307 or 731-2308 or 731-2309 or 731-2310 or 731-2311 or 731-2312 or 731-2313 or 731-2314 or 731-2315 or 731-2316 or 731-2317 or 731-2318 or 731-2319 or 731-2320 or 731-2321 or 731-2322 or 731-2323 or 731-2324 or 731-2325 or 731-2326 or 731-2327 or 731-2328 or 731-2329 or 731-2330 or 731-2331 or 731-2332 or 731-2333 or 731-2334 or 731-2335 or 731-2336 or 731-2337 or 731-2338 or 731-2339 or 731-2340 or 731-2341 or 731-2342 or 731-2343 or 731-2344 or 731-2345 or 731-2346 or 731-2347 or 731-2348 or 731-2349 or 731-2350 or 731-2351 or 731-2352 or 731-2353 or 731-2354 or 731-2355 or 731-2356 or 731-2357 or 731-2358 or 731-2359 or 731-2360 or 731-2361 or 731-2362 or 731-2363 or 731-2364 or 731-2365 or 731-2366 or 731-2367 or 731-2368 or 731-2369 or 731-2370 or 731-2371 or 731-2372 or 731-2373 or 731-2374 or 731-2375 or 731-2376 or 731-2377 or 731-2378 or 731-2379 or 731-2380 or 731-2381 or 731-2382 or 731-2383 or 731-2384 or 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731-2800 or 731-2801 or 731-2802 or 731-2803 or 731-2804 or 731-2805 or 731-2806 or 731-2807 or 731-2808 or 731-2809 or 731-2810 or 731-2811 or 731-2812 or 731-2813 or 731-2814 or 731-2815 or 731-2816 or 731-2817 or 731-2818 or 731-2819 or 731-2820 or 731-2821 or 731-2822 or 731-2823 or 731-2824 or 731-2825 or 731-2826 or 731-2827 or 731-2828 or 731-2829 or 731-2830 or 731-2831 or 731-2832 or 731-2833 or 731-2834 or 731-2835 or 731-2836 or 731-2837 or 731-2838 or 731-2839 or 731-2840 or 731-2841 or 731-2842 or 731-2843 or 731-2844 or 731-2845 or 731-2846 or 731-2847 or 731-2848 or 731-2849 or 731-2850 or 731-2851 or 731-2852 or 731-2853 or 731-2854 or 731-2855 or 731-2856 or 731-2857 or 731-2858 or 731-2859 or 731-2860 or 731-2861 or 731-2862 or 731-2863 or 731-2864 or 731-2865 or 731-2866 or 731-2867 or 731-2868 or 731-2869 or 731-2870 or 731-2871 or 731-2872 or 731-2873 or 731-2874 or 731-2875 or 731-2876 or 731-2877 or 731-2878 or 731-2879 or 731-2880 or 731-2881 or 731-2882 or 731-2883 or 731-2884 or 731-2885 or 731-2886 or 731-2887 or 731-2888 or 731-2889 or 731-2890 or 731-2891 or 731-2892 or 731-2893 or 731-2894 or 731-2895 or 731-2896 or 731-2897 or 731-2898 or 731-2899 or 731-2900 or 731-2901 or 731-2902 or 731-2903 or 731-2904 or 731-2905 or 731-2906 or 731-2907 or 731-2908 or 731-2909 or 731-2910 or 731-2911 or 731-2912 or 731-2913 or 731-2914 or 731-2915 or 731-2916 or 731-2917 or 731-2918 or 731-2919 or 731-2920 or 731-2921 or 731-2922 or 731-2923 or 731-2924 or 731-2925 or 731-2926 or 731-2927 or 731-2928 or 731-2929 or 731-2930 or 731-2931 or 731-2932 or 731-2933 or 731-2934 or 731-2935 or 731-2936 or 731-2937 or 731-2938 or 731-2939 or 731-2940 or 731-2941 or 731-2942 or 731-2943 or 731-2944 or 731-2945 or 731-2946 or 731-2947 or 731-2948 or 731-2949 or 731-2950 or 731-2951 or 731-2952 or 731-2953 or 731-2954 or 731-2955 or 731-2956 or 731-2957 or 731-2958 or 731-2959 or 731-2960 or 731-2961 or 731-2962 or 731-2963 or 731-2964 or 731-2965 or 731-2966 or 731-2967 or 731-2968 or 731-2969 or 731-2970 or 731-2971 or 731-2972 or 731-2973 or 731-2974 or 731-2975 or 731-2976 or 731-2977 or 731-2978 or 731-2979 or 731-2980 or 731-2981 or 731-2982 or 731-2983 or 731-2984 or 731-2985 or 731-2986 or 731-2987 or 731-2988 or 731-2989 or 731-2990 or 731-2991 or 731-2992 or 731-2993 or 731-2994 or 731-2995 or 731-2996 or 731-2997 or 731-2998 or 731-2999 or 731-3000

"CROSSING BOARDERS FOR OTHERS"

The Parish of St. James the Great in Ayala Alabang will present its opening Boardwalk's for Others', a fashion presentation showcasing the national costumes of participants residing in the village. It will be highlighted by the fabulous collection of Jose Pilay Moreno which was presented at the 2004 Philippine Independence Day celebration in Washington D.C. This will be the first time that this international community in Ayala Alabang will join hands with the Filipino residents for worthwhile causes such as: the Indian Tsunami Refugee, Manilan Kits, Tsunami City Jail, Ayala Alabang Hospice Foundation and some of the poorest families all over the Philippines. The show will be held at the Reception Hall of the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC), CCP Complex, Roxas Blvd., on Sunday, Nov. 28. For ticket reservations call Metro or Bicolano at the Coop-Office: 845-6365 or 845-9140 or Lucena at 931-2228 or 731-2228 or 731-2229 or 731-2230 or 731-2231 or 731-2232 or 731-2233 or 731-2234 or 731-2235 or 731-2236 or 731-2237 or 731-2238 or 731-2239 or 731-2240 or 731-2241 or 731-2242 or 731-2243 or 731-2244 or 731-2245 or 731-2246 or 731-2247 or 731-2248 or 731-2249 or 731-2250 or 731-2251 or 731-2252 or 731-2253 or 731-2254 or 731-2255 or 731-2256 or 731-2257 or 731-2258 or 731-2259 or 731-2260 or 731-2261 or 731-2262 or 731-2263 or 731-2264 or 731-2265 or 731-2266 or 731-2267 or 731-2268 or 731-2269 or 731-2270 or 731-2271 or 731-2272 or 731-2273 or 731-2274 or 731-2275 or 731-2276 or 731-2277 or 731-2278 or 731-2279 or 731-2280 or 731-2281 or 731-2282 or 731-2283 or 731-2284 or 731-2285 or 731-2286 or 731-2287 or 731-2288 or 731-2289 or 731-2290 or 731-2291 or 731-2292 or 731-2293 or 731-2294 or 731-2295 or 731-2296 or 731-2297 or 731-2298 or 731-2299 or 731-2300 or 731-2301 or 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GSK DONATES TO UIAITFE

GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) through its philanthropic program recently donated various medicines to Philippine Red Cross (PRC) Quezon City chapter to support UIAITFE medical mission that coincided with the celebration of its 11th year anniversary. The UIAITFE medical mission consists of antibiotics, medicines for asthma, hypertensity and gout, among others. These quality medicines have now been made more accessible to most Filipinos through price reductions of up to 34 percent. Photo is shown The Umpenio (right), GlaxoSmithKline's product manager for UIAITFE, handing over the donations to Uiaitfe representative Anna Maria Bautista.

Security Bank promo raffles off dream condo

IN CELEBRATION OF ITS 55TH ANNIVERSary Security Bank Corp. launches "Save and Win", a nationwide consumer raffle promotion where new and existing depositors get a chance to win a dream residential condominium unit or the cash Peso Savonettes in Studio, One Bedroom, Two Bedroom and Three Bedroom City. Other valuable prizes to make are 55 high-tech lifestyle gadgets such as a Sony Plasma TV, Apple iBooks, Nokia N91 cellphones, and Apple iPod Videos, and other fabulous prizes, divided for the fast-paced urban lifestyle.

"Save and Win" raffle promo is open to individual or joint accountholders of any of these Security Bank deposit products: Peso Savings Deposits, Peso Savings ATM, Build Up Savings, Regular Peso Checking account, CheckRight, CheckOne, All-in-One Checking Account and Us Dollar Savings. The promo is ongoing until Jan. 31, 2005.

Every P5,000 or $100 of the qualified account's computed 3-month average Daily Balance (ADB) from Sept. 1, 2004 to Jan. 31, 2005 is entitled to one system-generated raffle entry. Eligible accounts must reflect an increase of P10,000 or $2,000 in their full five-month ADB during the five-month promo period to qualify. Winners will be drawn in real electronic raffle under the supervision of the Department of Trade and Industry representatives on Feb. 23, 2005.

"Save and Win" is one of the many ways that Security Bank celebrates over half a century of banking excellence to show its appreciation and share its success with its loyal clients for their continuing trust and confidence, for the complete promo details and mechanics, log on to www.securitybank.com.ph or visit any of the 134 Security Bank branches nationwide.

The best kept secret in fat loss

AT THE COUNTRY'S FIRST 8000-square-meter slimming facility exclusively for men, Eastern centers the importance of health to men. Its unique combination of highly effective scientific methods using slimming equipment and Eastern massage techniques has given Eastern a reputation that has turned its name into an inescapable buzzword among those who know. They need to not only look better, but feel better and healthier from as well. For men and both men and women have been more effective, not more accessible.

Initial Eastern signature treatment program is the Specialized Therapy System, is a three-pronged program that first engages your metabolism, breaks down stubborn fat and eases the body.

As with everything, the slimmer's cooperation is the beginning to the success of the program. They are advised to come as lean. It saves a week for the first four months, more if necessary, but while Eastern does not guarantee overnight miracles, they do promise changes for the better if one does not skip appointments, stick to the program and truly pursue his time for loss and weight loss goals.

In today's society vanity is just an overused word. It's now acceptable for men to care about the way they look. Now is the time to get back to your ideal shape and feel the compliments that you receive speak for themselves.

To learn more about the treatment offered at Eastern Center, call 709-3399. You may also check out their website at www.eastern-center.com.

The great Podium sale

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN WHEN ALL malls head to The Podium. Enjoy great bargains and good times at the mall's 10-day sale on Sept. 25 to Oct. 7. Shoppers can enjoy up to 70 percent discounts at more than 100 stores, restaurants and services outlets. There are great fashion finds; beauty's 30 percent off on sweaters, tees and pants; there's 40 percent discount on sports wear, name it; shirts and up to 50 percent discounts on bags and shoes; and there's Sports Authority's new The up to 50 percent discounts at Nike and Speedo. It's also a good time to shop for shoes. Exotic offers up to 60% percent off. Lacoste up to 30 percent off and 50 shoes up to 30 percent off. If you're shopping for kids, check out the bargains at 20 by Tag Kingdom and Baby & Co. while shopping, try out the offerings of the mall's specialty restaurants and food outlets or relax at The Spa and the Body Merchant clinic. Better still, enjoy hot and cool nights at the mall's sounds of the soul with special performances by Martha on Sept. 30 Young artists take centerstage on the evening, Oct. 1. New age pianist Richard Yap on Oct. 2. Young artists take centerstage on the evening, Oct. 3. Young artists take centerstage on the evening, Oct. 4. New age pianist Richard Yap on Oct. 5. Young artists take centerstage on the evening, Oct. 6. Young artists take centerstage on the evening, Oct. 7. Young artists take centerstage on the evening, Oct. 8. Young artists take centerstage on the evening, Oct. 9. Young artists take centerstage on the evening, Oct. 10. Young artists take centerstage on the evening, Oct. 11. Young artists take centerstage on the evening, Oct. 12. Young artists take centerstage on the evening, Oct. 13. Young artists take centerstage on the evening, Oct. 14. Young artists take centerstage on the evening, Oct. 15. Young artists take centerstage on the evening, Oct. 16. 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European firms to help education

By Roland W. Dorotan

THE EUROPEAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE has decided to take part in the government's "Adopt-A-School" program to contribute to the improvement of the "deteriorating" system of education.

ECCP executive vice president Henry Schumacher said foreign firms are ill to support the new chief of the Department of Education by joining the program, among others.

"Education Secretary Jesli Lapus needs the support of top private sector to overhaul the mismatch in the country's educational programs and the actual needs of the market," Schumacher said.

"Having a manager at the helm of the DepEd will also make it easier for our businesses to accept a public-private partnership," he added.

He said ECCP members were willing to participate in the "Adopt-A-School" program as it has a wide array selection from which companies can choose from.

The program was put up through Republic Act No. 4522 or "Adopt-A-School Act" of 2000 to allow private entities to help public schools through various programs and support packages including construction of facilities, donation of books and computers, and training of faculty and administrators.

Further, Schumacher said ECCP was offering to the DepEd the numerous workforce training materials that were developed with foreign assistance since 1992.

"There is a high percentage of high school graduates who do not have the resources to enroll in college," he said.

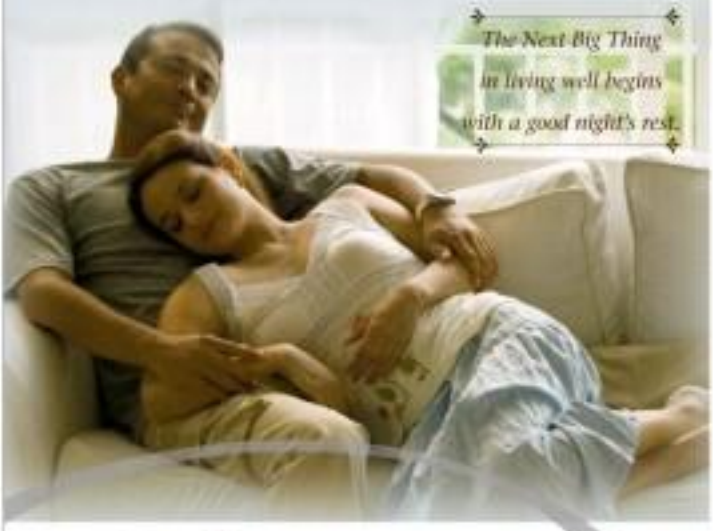
"The program, alternating between a vocational technical school and an employer, will allow these students to acquire skills and earn a decent living."

Chamber to join 'Adopt-A-School'

AyalaLand Premier

Insomnia is unheard of at Ayala Westgrove Heights.

The Next Big Thing in living well begins with a good night's rest.



It could be the orchards, or the gardens or the hundreds of hectares of sprawling views. It could be the lazy hum of the breeze over the rolling hills. Whatever it is, Ayala Westgrove Heights seems to be the antidote to city living, and the perfect prescription for a good night's rest. If that's an idea you're comfortable with, consider making your home at Ayala Westgrove Heights and enjoy pleasant days, and pleasant dreams.

AYALA Westgrove Heights

Call: 728-7000 • e-mail: ask@ayalalandpremier.com • Log on to www.ayalalandpremier.com

Good nights are even better at Ayala Westgrove Heights

Sleeping blissfully is one of the by-products of living at Ayala Westgrove Heights. And it's not just because the 400+ hectare property cradles serenades breezes along the scenery of its rolling hills. And not just because the sprawling gardens and sparkling waters provide a freshness that soothes even the most frayed of nerves.

The reason that Ayala Westgrove Heights brings is also due to the security residents can experience here. Through the Ayala Property Management Corp (APMC), the maintenance of common areas like the gardens, clubhouses, pools, orchards and such are meticulously taken care of. From shrub like waste management, 24-hour guards, minor electrical and plumbing repairs, assistance in organizing parties can all be catered through APMC, giving residents unprecedented freedom from stress. More so, a rescue vehicle and fire truck are on standby, 24-hours a day for added safety and peace of mind.

This is the kind of care residents receive here at Ayala Westgrove Heights. And it assures not just lasting value and luxury for all, but more importantly, a lifetime (or even more) of good nights and great days.

LIFESTYLE
Editor Chris Baral-Feriscos
ECOLOGY

IN THIS ISSUE
More on 'liquid gold' /E3

Reinventing 'piaya' and other Negros specialties

IT WAS THE SMELL AND TASTE of freshly cooked piaya that made the first Negros Trade Fair I attended an unforgettable.

And every year since, I've hankered for that crisp treat and the chewy molasses inside. Alas, regulations in newer venues do not permit that kind of cooking.

And so, for this year's trade fair, the 11-in. piaya and even the food served at the cutting area suffered from the lack of just-cooked goodness.

It was amusing to hear stories about how some Negrenses at vending the fair at Rockwell compared what was being sold there to what their Tatas used to and to do. You can imagine how their lingering voices must have pronounced somewhere as not as fatty (or as oily), not as fine.

But it will always be that way as long as the original ingredients are no longer available and the people who made them are no longer around. The kind of flour or the land used makes a difference. And the cook's way of folding in the batter and the timing the last-inch swirls can never be duplicated.

Still, it is commendable that many of the traditional specialties of Negros can still be had. How wonderful to know that piaya and the many cookies are always available.

The old is new again

And yet Negrenses didn't stop at preserving what was already there. They moved on and created new things. This is how new food specialties came to be. A few examples are the pineapple pie of El Ideal, the mango jam of Valencia and the buttermilch. We, all are victims of mango-lood.

But there are originals, such as the tempting sliced, spring roll of coconut pith. It was created by local cooks (then sold through the mangalod, vendors who were around town selling their wares in woven bamboo containers (balidan). Also Chinese-influenced cookies.

Every Negros fair in Manila highlights the new things with the creations of the Binirayan (golden) awards. Members of the Association of Negros Producers present their products to be judged.

And that was what happened at last week's trade fair where I, together with four others, graded each new food according to presentation, packaging, taste and originality or creativity. The locals, however, hadn't homemade judges when this columnist was nowhere.

Most of the new products were sweet, again, variations on cookies and pastries. The most promising to me were cheese pieces that reminded me of Ilg Sweetena, only much better. Hoppe's Food Turo is are elongated pinwheels of pastry and fresh jams of either pineapple, mango or banana.

The most intriguing was the piaya cookies from Havana of Negros. It's merely the crust without the molasses inside. For purists, the absence might be jarring. (I don't know what their thinking is on another variation where the piaya crust is super chewy-crisp, yeah.)

'Inasal' pizza

The crackers are usually bland even with the added flavors of cheese and chicken and cheese. So it was a blessing that it was served with what for pressure-cooked chicken inasal pizza.

I've had adobo pizza but the chicken inasal was a first. It had the flavor of lemon grass and the color of achuete (annatto) oil. The chicken was shredded. Excellent with the pizza crackers. Unfortunately the pilot was not on sale.

This year also, "Treasured Adobo Recipes," a booklet compiled and edited by Lyn Ledesma, was launched. The recipes are from the 2004 2003 Adobo Festival, a competition held for eight years now as the Bahay Negrenses Binirayan in Silay City.

First-prize winner Margarita Locsin made the adobo recipe of the Molina family. It uses chicken and pork as well as cornus though a footnote says potatoes can be substituted. Like the Batangas adobo, it uses cashew instead of soy sauce.

The adobo recipe can also be mixed with rice and then stuffed in a deboned chicken marinated in adobo sauce then baked.

Second prize was a vegetarian adobo by Norma T. Bacal. It has green beans, squash, red and green bell peppers and cabbage, the choice of pale (taro), a favored ingredient in Negros. The very first winner of the adobo festival in 1998, Elizabeth Negre, also used only cabbage.

Third place was an adobong maskara ng baboy (pork liver) that was third. If you add some fried pig house cubs, I imagine it would be like eating cooked barbay.

New words

Every time I read a regional book, I learn new words. In the book, pelada is defined as the native green and red bell pepper (Capsicum annuale. Learn of dilling that grow wild in the farms are used to line the pot when cooking galle to prevent scorching but are also used for cooking.

Allie prints did the illustrations for the booklet. Every entry in the two adobo was screened in the style of Getosa y Figueras, a Filipino art form that was born and that flourished in the 18th century. The figures that formed each letter were vegetables, meat, utensils and kitchen equipment.

The launch also included two demonstrations by Glenda Barretto and Margarita Fores. Barretto cooked Lyn Ledesma's boiled chicken and Fores, a Negrense herself, did the pork and chicken adobo of her grandmother, senora Juez Arsenia. Given the restrictions on cooking with open flame they used electric skillets.

E-mail me at pinoyfood@yahoo.com.

NEW-FANGLED piaya cookies served with chicken inasal pizza.

FRUIT twirls of pineapple, mango and banana

A COLLECTION of winning adobo recipes.

COUNTRY COOKING

Micky Fenoy

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ATOMO AND WEBOY — BY LIRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY — BY STEVEN MANGUNAY

BIRD MACHINE — BY MANIK ABREN

MANONGSONGS — BY JOHNO TUJOD

TULOOK — BY PAPI LIMO TATUM PALAMBELAG

BEN — BY DANIEL SHELTON

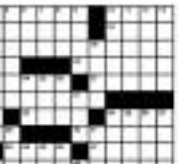
DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Ski outfit
4 Style formerly associated with Brisbane
14 Bottom, at sea
15 Ignore
17 Organism requiring oxygen
18 Kind of tea
19 Intense, powerful
20 Start of Robert Bentley quote
22 Sorbet
23 Brewery
24 Bicycle
25 Use a sword
27 Part 2 of quote
30 Magic amount
31 Bulk
32 Latin "do" verb
33 Perhaps a girl
40 Cake by Colleen Hall
41 Longing
47 Title holder
48 Part 3 of quote
52 Hold tightly
54 Excessively
56 Undergarments
57 Make money
58 Exit of quote
60 "I, too, am America" poet
61 Feature of location
62 Bronze
63 Goddess of folly
64 Baby bear
65 Shade
71 Shade provider

DOWN
1 Banana wrapper
2 Excited, excitedly
3 Idols for years
4 Boxing rhythm
5 Fine print word
6 Coach Pennington
7 Tolkien tree
8 Designer's sketch
9 Kazakhstan state
10 Bar accessory
11 Lone Ranger's buddy
12 "Love" in concert
13 Cello
16 Alum
21 Screed
24 Hamlet lives in Elsinore
25 Little devil
26 Singer Richard
28 Richard's 24 Kim's assistant
29 Tiger's opponent
31 Actress in "The Mummy"
34 Sincerity
35 Lavender's secondary hallmark
36 Schoolmaster's lesson
37 Words of "Meet the Flintstones"
38 Rock
39 Chess piece
41 Actor Coolidge
42 Suite in "Deck Hall"
46 Late play
49 Abbreviated
49 Olympics official
50 Wine holders
51 Regretful groan
53 Foliage
53 Perfect for a perfect
55 Planted
59 Bird of golf
59 Wolf of WC trotters
60 Powerful stink
62 Music conclusion
63 The rest in question
64 Computer judge

By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved



HOROSCOPE

THIS BORN TODAY: You're a romantic. You have great taste. Others find you alluring and magnetic. You often have inner knowledge about others. Don't let this be provided into the mindset. You love beauty and can admire strength in others. You're dogged about succeeding more goals. Surrounding yourself with beautiful things is important with for the past nine years' insight and that year. (Answers for those.)

BORNS on this day: Naomi Watts, actress; Brigitte Nielsen, actress; Marcello Mastroianni, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Of the ways to save time, one involves not doing what you want to do when you grow up. (Magnifiers on your ego.) Wait a bit—it's worth how many years experience you've had.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Continue to work to be up, make, and keep a schedule or a routine, where you feel. You have a vigorous exercise regimen—a responsible decision on the people.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): This is a time of change for you. You're not sure about where you fall, or how others see you. Stretch, of change are blowing in your direction.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You have more than ever before, you want to capitalize even more on your strengths. Promised a steady income, and you want to be credible. You also want to help other people.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): With Saturn in your sign now, the responsibility is yours to own. You're dealing with serious issues. Actually, you're starting to reassess your self.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): It's important to know that you have a sense of where things over—especially phone and communication. This is not time. Be interested!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You enjoy the company of others. Libraries don't necessarily mean books. Someone older might give you good advice now. Be open to what others have to say.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is a time of great achievement. You're ambitious, and you're prepared to learn what it takes to forge out the mindset.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You might be getting along on some level. You prefer the morning and socializing from others is draining. Don't worry. The way ahead you more self-confident and evolved.

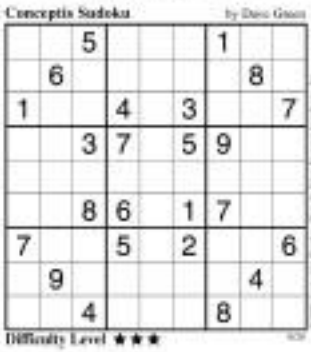
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You might be getting along on some level. You prefer the morning and socializing from others is draining. Don't worry. The way ahead you more self-confident and evolved.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Partnerships might involve more. You are becoming more focused on your goals and your personal commitments.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Continue to work hard now in a time when you feel overwhelmed. You are handwriting. Communication at this time is worth exactly as much as your word.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku — by Dave Green



Difficulty Level ★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

4	8	1	9	5	3	2	7	6
7	9	6	2	4	1	3	5	8
2	5	3	8	7	6	4	1	9
9	1	5	7	4	6	8	2	3
8	4	3	1	2	5	9	6	7
6	7	2	3	9	8	1	4	5
1	2	9	4	6	7	5	3	8
5	3	4	6	8	2	7	9	1
3	6	8	5	1	9	6	8	2

More on olive oil

KITCHEN RESCUE

Maggie Aglibot

OLIVE OIL IS CLASSified by the degree of acidity. The best are cold-pressed varieties:

Extra Virgin—for First-rate, most flavorful and, obviously, the costliest of them all. It is a cold-pressed purchase of the first extraction, pressing of the olives, with 0 to 1 percent acidity. It comes in a myriad of colors from deep vegetable green, to champagne.

In general, the darker the color, the deeper the more reminiscent it is of the olives' flavor, with exceptions, of course. But color does not necessarily reflect quality.

Virgin—First-press oil, good flavor and aroma with acidity not exceeding 2 percent.

Refined—Extracting the same chemical structure and the same amounts of micronutrients and fat as regular olive oil, the oil goes through a refining/filtration process. Refining reduces the acidity and makes the oil lighter in color and flavor. It is sometimes labeled as pure olive oil or light olive oil.

Pure—Blend of extra virgin and virgin oils.

Olive oil—a combination of refined olive oil and virgin or extra virgin oil

Proper use

For baking and cooking, where the flavor of olive oil is not desired, use refined or light olive oil. Since the refining process gives this type a higher smoking point, this is perfect for high-heat frying.

Use olive oil for low- to medium-heat cooking, salad dressings and marinades.

Unfortunately, the best of the extra virgin and extra virgin olive oils is not readily available in the Philippines. We even have to hand-carry it home, given the chance to purchase it. What we have is far from the real deal. I wouldn't use it on hot salads, as it, with just a bit of salt, pepper or lemon, taste unbearably so as palatable best on to my food just before serving.

Every time I have exceptional oil, I don't really use it for cooking, except for the occasional sauté, as a quick pan-fry for that golden crust or whatever the flavor of good olive oil is sensible to my dish. Intensities, extra virgin olive oil and all its flavor levels down once it has high content, above 180°C, cups, a waste of such fine commodity. So use your "liquid gold," as olive oil is known, wisely!

Olive oil should be stored in a cool, dark place for up to six months. For me, the sooner it is consumed from the day it is made, the better.

Good cholesterol

Olive oil has many benefits. People in the Mediterranean basin, where olive oil is widely used, suffer less from obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, rheumatism and breast cancer, and enjoy long and healthy lives. Olive oil contains phenol; the higher the phenol, the higher the HDL "good" cholesterol. And the higher the HDL, the higher the level of antioxidants in the blood.

The fatty acid content of olive oil are similar to mother's milk so this oil may be given to children. Olive fruits benefit from the oil's high content of antioxidants, which improves cardiovascular circulation and lower down cell aging.

Here are three recipes using Spanish Olive Oil... Enjoy!

Tuna Over toast lay lettuce (not iceberg for color), a piece of tuna in olive oil, season with salt and pepper, squeeze lemon juice, dribble with olive oil. Garnish with hard-boiled eggs and cherry tomato.

Sweet asparagus Mix 3 tbsp olive oil, 1 tbsp vinegar, 2 tsp parsley, egg white from 1 boiled egg (chopped), salt, pepper. Spread over toasted baguette. Lay green asparagus spears. Garnish with tomatoes.

Mushrooms Choose large fresh mushrooms. Remove stems and insert caps whole in olive oil. For stuffing: Sauté 1 c chopped mushrooms, ½ c green onions, 1 chopped hard boiled egg and ¼ c jamon serrano. Stuff on mushroom caps.

Sardines Mix 3 tbsp olive oil, 1 tbsp vinegar, 2 tsp parsley, egg white from 1 boiled egg (chopped), salt, pepper. Spread over toasted baguette. Top with a chain of sardine in olive oil. Garnish with lettuce and cherry tomato.

White asparagus Spread mayonnaise over toasted bread. Top with white asparagus spears. Garnish with green and black olives, and a cliff spray.

Anchovy Spread mayonnaise over toast. Top with sliced boiled egg, anchovy fillets. Garnish with olives and pimentos.

Dionisio Ignacio Embuscado, del Spanish Economic and Commercial Office, Glen Toledo, mother and the Spanish business for Foreign Trade.

E-mail the author at inquirer@inquirer.com.ph

EXTRA virgin olive oil and all its flavor levels down in high temperatures, as use the "liquid gold" wisely.

FOR BAKING and cooking, where the flavor of olive oil is not desired, use refined or light olive oil.

Last chance to eat your way to a trip to Singapore

THE INAUGURAL FOOD PROMO "EAT! Try, Info!" of the Singapore Tourism Board Philippines (STB-P) ends Sept. 30. Diners have a chance to win a free trip to Singapore in the second grand draw to be held this month of September.

STB-P unveiled recently each of the five winners in the first grand draw with one round-trip ticket to Singapore including a four-day three-night accommodation in a deluxe hotel plus daily breakfast, and a Shop 'N Eat Tour.

Participating in the "Eat, Try, Info!" promo are Singaporean franchises Bee Cheng Hiang, Bread Talk, Fish & Co., Kopi Tiam, and Singaporean restaurant Ikan.

Each customer gets one raffle coupon for every single receipt of P500 worth of food products from a participating establishment, which must include one of the three stipulated.

The first five winners of a trip to Singapore were Ang Ang Wong in Bee Cheng Hiang, Summer Tan in BreadTalk, Oscar Bolaños in Fish & Co., Marcos Peña in Kopi Tiam, and Irene Ibrieta in Ikan.

Call 8128946, see posters and flyers, or visit participating food establishments.

sun

October feast

Tinman

WOW

The Wedding Library

Marionnaud Now open. 2nd Floor, Mall of Asia

THE SEAFOOD Club by Red Crab at Greenbelt 3 and Ibiri Grilled Tower Inc., present "Viva Singapura" food promo until Oct. 30. Buffet diners get a chance to win two round-trip tickets to Singapore. Buffet is served: 11 a.m.–2 p.m., and 6–9:30 p.m. Buffet dinners on Nov. 4. Dishes include Pepsih, Mixed Seafood Sambal, Fish Head Curry, Mee Goreng, Chicken Satay, Singaporean Chili Crab, Butter Ginger Crab, Crab Bergedil and "Sambuni" Baked Fish. Or Beef Rub with Honey Butter Sauce, Tomato Glazed Roast Pork, Prawns with Malagosa and Cashew, plus an array of appetizers, salad and desserts. Call 7574 LEN or 8189585.

BREAKFAST AT FIGARO

Figaro offers breakfast selections including Creamy Scrambled Eggs, Spanish Porta, Hibal French Toast, Croque Madame, French Mushroom Omelettes and Croissants. There are 10 Figaro outlets to put you in a breakfast mood. Visit www.figaroeatlies.com.

DINING OUT

BASIL Ristorante Bistro presents the Buffet Feast from all favorites from "Great Local Breakfast Also Included Dishes, Thailand, Italy, Korea and Mexico. On the menu are smoked specialties, salmon skewers, chicken satay and corn with the cob, as well as fresh vegetables and seafood, among others. The Harvest Festival is available in all Basil Ristorante Buffet branches for only P575, and P475 on scheduled promo days. Basil branches are at SM Megamall, Glorietta 2, Alabang Town Center, Ilaya, Festive Walk and Wack Wack Avenue. Call 637 7700 or 6353004.

PANCAKE House is offering three specialty made hot crepes for any time of the day. The Ham, Tomato crepe is filled with a mix of sliced ham, tomato slices and shavings of Italian cheese to blend with butter and sprinkled with Parmesan cheese and dried basil. The Chicken Island crepe has a medley of chicken, corn, black olives, diced tomato, sautéed in shavings of Italian cheese, laced with blend dressing. The Tuna Silky crepe is filled with tuna flakes and blend with Italian cheese and a hint of butter. Pancake House has 61 outlets, with the newest branches located at SM City Sta. Rosa, Parcel 1a1 Air Square, the SM Mall of Asia and in Eastwood City. Call 8943000 or e-mail phil@pancakehouse.com.ph.

SUNNY Restaurant introduces a special Diwali menu Oct. 1–31. Diwali, the Festival of Lights marking the beginning of the Hindu New Year, falls on Oct. 27 this year. To celebrate the occasion, Sunnies offers dishes from different regions of India. Sunnie Crystal Garden Restaurant is at 108-C Jupiter St., Makati City. Call 8893 24 Ext 806 to 10. Delivery, catering and take-out parties are available. Visit www.sunnies.com.ph.

FISH & SIL Restaurant marks its first anniversary by offering the "Best Fish & Chipsie Treat" for only P199 from 2–6 p.m. until Oct. 31. The establishments of delicious fish and chips are served in paper and covered with chips. The Best Fish and Chipsie Treat is available for dine-in, 2–6 p.m., Monday–Thursday until Oct. 31. It may not be combined with other offers and discounts. Fish & Sil is located at the 2/F Greenbelt 3. Tel. (7789101/32 and at Shoemuseum Shangri-La Mall. tel. (6351404).

SUPER Bowl of China is giving away until Oct. 10 Dog Bo Tao soup—two-liquid consommé dishes—and offering a 10-percent discount on dine-in. Be reminded for a minimum one-time dine-in purchase of P500. Menumakers are available in boxes of 10 and have been placed in the following Super Bowl of China fast outlets in different parts of Metro Manila. Also visit the official Big Bowl Bar Restaurant located at Greenbelt 3 Ayala Center, Makati.

DAVID CHANG Feast at La Breve has a daily Second Buffet 11 a.m.–2 p.m., Monday–Saturday, for P325 per person. The buffet offers Filipino and international dishes. For dinner, it has slightly special like Italian, Thai, Japanese, etc. The resort also offers children's pastime for a minimum of 30 kids for P500 each. For reservations, events and outings, the resort offers live band and seminar packages and a movie viewing package. The Nasty Country Resort is on the National Highway Sevilla Center, San Fernando, La Union. Call (7250088 or (2366433 or visit www.nastycountryresort.com.

STEET Wine and Cuisine is the hot Cafe of the Honey marinated Guernsey, Swordfish Filet Spice Duck, Roast Chicken Flavored with Cracked Black Pepper in Mint Salad and Lamb Chops marinated in Rosemary. Dishes are available in Basilan Café's exclusive lunch and dinner set menus, without extra charge until Sept. 30. Meanwhile, Beer Tasting for Industrial class ale dish at The Fireplace. Call 2494 254.

MERIDIEN ORIENTAL BAKRI's Gastronomic Bar and Sofa Dominic Fernández Restaurant features a buffet of Mexican bar chow consisting of Blue Nile Blend with Fajitas, Burritos with Mexican Salsa, Nachos Nachos for Nile Class with re-fried beans, Cheese and Jalapeños, Chili con Carne and sweets like Dulce de Almendras (almond flavored Vanilla Creme Brulee). No added food is the Fajitas cooking station. Call 8108111.

SUBMARINE Manila Foodcourt is giving away free concert tickets and Coke promo items in lucky draw during the "Food Trip, Sound Trip" until Sept. 30. Participating branches are Robinsons Galleria, Robinsons Place Manila, Robinsons Place Imus and Robinsons Starmills Pampanga. Concerts to drive take at Robinsons Galleria, Cinema 9 featuring Pinoy Idols, Jamich and Iskapop. Oct. 2, 6 p.m. at Robinsons Place Manila Cinema 7 featuring Hale and Gelaby. Oct. 10. Call 6365 057.

Barbecues from around the world

KOMPLIKA offers tennis meals, Monday–Saturday. Diners get to choose from its 12 tennis offerings from P268 to P495. Komplika has outlets at 2/L Greenbelt 3, Ayala Center, Makati City (tel. 8812180; 8934456); and Greenhills Shopping Center, San Juan (7219851 to 7219869). It is open daily for lunch and dinner.

Cooking with mozzarella

COOKING CLASSES

THE PHILIPPINE CULINARY INSTITUTE, School of Culinary Arts is holding the following classes: Sept. 30—Mozzarella Showcase—Assorted Platter with Marinated Mozzarella, Fried Mozzarella with Mushroom Sauce, Pasta Torta and Mozzarella Salad; Baked Stuffed Chops with Mozzarella and Prosciutto with Pomodoro Risotto; Mozzarella Sushi; Chicken with Jamón Mozzarella.

Oct. 2—Jewels of the Mediterranean (all-day)—Iberian Chicken "Greek Style" with Greek-style Potato Pasta, "Bolinaffar" Grape Leaf-wrapped Baked Tilapia with Greek Salad; Mediterranean Pasta Salad; Greek Pizza; Baklava.

Oct. 4—Mixta Ways with Beef (all-day)—Beef Empanada Dores Pao Ways; Beef and Barley Soup; Espresso Bonfeelle Portobello Sauce, Delicious Beef Ribs with Potatoes, Beef and Bone Marrow Stew with Gravy Rice.

Oct. 6—Not for Vampires! (all-day)—The Most Exotic Dried Fruit, Creamy Garlic Soup, Garlic Chip Roasted Prawn, Garlic Stuffed Roast Beef, Pork Roast Cream Roast with Garlic Jelly, Garlic Chicken Served with Garlic Salad, onion, dessert.

For complete schedule and inquiries, call 8288298, 8213006, 8330197.

Steak and roast

Learn the techniques for cooking good steak at Maya Kitchen's "Steaks and Roast" class on Sept. 30, 9 a.m.–1 p.m.

Covered are Beef Essentials with Marinating Sauce, Mimosa Steak in Pepper Sauce, Pan-Roasted Rosemary Chicken with Beef Mashed Potatoes Pan Jus, Roasted Pork with Applesauce and Rice Pilaf, Blackened Pork with Succotash, Caljun Butter and Clove Beans Steak with Mushroom Sauce.

Lecture on preparation of basic steak sauce, marinades for roast beef and proper techniques of grilling are also included.

The class on "Marketing" will be conducted Oct. 7 and 14, 2–6 p.m. It covers marketing etiquette, sales service, business etiquette and telephone skills.

"Baking Basics (Fundamentals of Bakery Production)," will be offered Oct. 5–6, 9 a.m.–1 p.m. It will include five sets of recipes: basic breads, yeast breads, quick breads, pies, cookies and cakes. Attendees get a free baking cookbook.

In "Advanced Cooking," Oct. 3–6, 2–6 p.m., participants learn the techniques of cooking a kitchen. It will include a workshop on the preparation of sauces, international menu from entrée to dessert to and sample cooking.

"Basic Culinary," Oct. 19–23 at 8 a.m.–2 p.m., and covers kitchen fundamental, such as proper hygiene, sanitation and safety, nutrition and nutritional cooking, etc. Actual preparation of dishes from appetizer to dessert is also included.

Lunches get a free Bite and Meals cookbook. Three Bakery Business (Advanced Bakery Prod.), Oct. 11–13, 2–6 p.m., provides the foundation for a bakery business. It covers the basic principles of bakery functions; baker's percentage with commercial methods in preparing breads, pies, cakes, pastries and bakery products.

Visit the Maya Kitchen (Sunday–Saturday) at 8/F Liberty Building, A. Arnaiz Ave., Makati City, or call 8921126 or 8923911 local 108. E-mail mayakitchen@hotmail.com or ho.com.ph.

The Maya Kitchen

Steaks and Roast Galore and More...

Join Maya Kitchen as it shows you different methods of preparing steaks and roasts with delicious sauces and different cuts. Also included are the basics and practice of your favorite steak recipes. Check out the schedule below and sign up now.

Steaks and Roast: Oct. 30 – Basic; 2 p.m. – 1 p.m. Beef Tagliatelle with Mustard Sauce, Mimosa Steak in Pepper Sauce, Pan-Roasted Rosemary Chicken with Beef Mashed Potatoes Pan Jus, Roasted Pork with Applesauce and Rice Pilaf, Blackened Pork with Succotash and Cajun Butter Clove Beans Steak with Mushroom sauce, including recipes on preparation of basic steak sauce, marinades for roast beef and proper techniques of grilling.

Marketing: Oct. 7 & 14; Basic; 2 – 6 p.m. Marketing Etiquette, Sales Service, Business Etiquette and Telephone Skills.

Beverages: Oct. 30; Basic; 2 – 6 p.m. Beverages Offered: Iced Coffee Concoction, Frappuccino Coffee Blended, Coffee Based Iced Beverages, Coffee Based Hot Beverages, Iced Tea Concoction, Fruit Juice Concoction, Milk Shakes, Fruit Shakes, Fruit Smoothies, Coffee Basics, Espresso Coffee Making, Coffee Grinding, Coffee Blending, Coffee Roasting, Espresso Coffee Making, Cappuccino Coffee Making, Coffee Based Iced Beverages, Coffee Based Hot Beverages, Iced Tea Concoction, Fruit Juice Concoction, Milk Shakes, Fruit Shakes, Fruit Smoothies, Coffee Basics, Espresso Coffee Making, Cappuccino Coffee Making, Coffee Grinding, Coffee Blending, Coffee Roasting

ENTERTAINMENT

Edited by Emmie G. Velarde

'Starstruck' hopefuls storm Cebu

CEBU CITY—AUDITIONS for "Starstruck: The Next Level," GMA 7's reality-based talent search, drew about a thousand young people to the SM City mall here over the weekend.

Seemingly Cebu, which delivers the most number of aspirants during auditions—at least 12,000 this year—has yet to produce a "Starstruck" winner several in its three-year run.

"So far, we've only had one runner-up and two made it as challengers," said Sister Marie Tan, station manager of GMA 7 in Cebu, referring to Regie Tongco, a finalist in the show's third season.

Still, Tan predicted on Friday that this year's audition attendance in the city would top the previous years' turnout as the qualifications for contenders have been loosened up to include talents with singing as a label aside.

Tan guessed it right, as the mall was filled to the rafters with young hopefuls who lined up hours before the mall opened at 10 a.m.

Allen Amazan, 18, and his cousin Rolan Caballero, 18, were among the last to take center stage at almost 10 p.m. on Saturday. They had been at the doors of SM at early as 10 a.m. Twelve hours later, they were still standing on queue and had not taken lunch.

"Okay lang," said Rolan, a soft-spoken Cebuano. "Kaya pa (We can still handle it). We had munchies for snacks. They cost only $1.75 each. He will anyway do that."

At the last group for the hysteric was called, Allen and Rolan screamed the opening to their song. Allen danced, Rolan sang, accompanying himself on his acoustic guitar. Their "screamers" on stage lasted hardly a minute, but this did not discourage them.

"We hate for the long haul," Rolan said in Filipino. "This is my only chance to make something of myself. It's a once chance, I know, but it's still a chance."

This is Rolan's second try with "Starstruck" he missed to be back next year if he still doesn't make it.

Rolan and he quit school for the financial reasons, echoing a familiar refrain among thousands of other hopefuls.

Ms. Elora and Ms. Theresa Dango, a pair of 19-year-old mates, arrived on a mission and daughter confirmation the same to showcase their acting talent.

"We wanted to be different," said Elora. "Acting is more challenging than singing or dancing."

The siblings have already been contenders on the local show "Eat."

Like the rests, meeting was short. Gloria Patagod Tol, 19, already had the taste of the limelight.

Pretty Gloria is a singer.

"I learned how to juggle in school," she told reporters. Entertainment. " Lately, I have been performing for different organizations."

Stage fright is not a problem for her, she said the lure of stardom is stronger than the prospect of a turning job overseas.

"There are thousands of teams going abroad," she said. "But I have this talent (singing), which makes me different."

"Starstruck" survivor Yasmien Kurdi acted as auditions master during the ready part of the screening. She soon chatted with one of the hopefuls.

By Nini Valera

SMACK. An aspirant with "Starstruck" winner Yasmien Kurdi

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JUDGES. Gwen Tan

CELEBS. Melai Cantiveros (left) and Allen Amazan. "We will survive."

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STAMPEDE. The big event at the audition venue.

The maker, not the medium

By Marinel R. Cruz

DRAMA. Filmmaker Joe Red

"THE DIGITAL MEDIUM should not be blamed for filmmakers' faults. It's the wrong position in digital movie making that should be addressed."

Independent filmmaker and producer Joe Red was speaking in the article, "The downside of digital," which came out in Malaya Entertainment on Sunday. Current media critic Tibbar Benavidez cited the 10 most common "shortcomings" of digital movies.

According to Red, Benavidez, a professor at the UP Film Institute, identified lapses or errors in some of the digital films he watched but failed to point out that these were committed by the filmmakers.

"I appreciate the points he raised. All of them are valid, except the writer should direct his statements to the band that pulls the trigger, not the gun, so to speak," Red stressed. "It's important that we point this out to young filmmakers so as not to discourage them."

Red presented Benavidez's statement on the failure of most local digital films to influence to its audience because of their "dangerous lack of narrative."

"We must accept that because of digital filmmaking, the monopoly of big movie outfits is already being stamped out. Now everybody gets to express their ideas," Red said. "It is because of this that great films like Nag-Pupukaldukan ni Shandrix Cheperal, 'Kaputol,' 'Kabisote' and 'Kinabit' have been created."

In the article, Benavidez stressed that films made using 20-tool formats are generally better than digital.

Red argued: "Superman Returns was made with digital cameras, but this doesn't make it inferior to the other Superman movies. If we talk about aesthetics, we cannot just say 20 mm is better. It really depends on the subject matter. That type of thinking is too conventional."

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"Kakabakang Idol" nominees (from left) Leonard Ocampo, Jhonalyn "Jhona" Sibao, Wrigdon "John" Dukay, Kenneth Paul "Yuna" Alonzo, Sharyll Anne "Shaina" Buenafe, John Janrico "Jack" Perey and Lalaine Enriquez, with host Ryan Agoncillo (fourth from left).

A different kind of 'Idol'

CHELSEA RAMOS-KENNETH PAUL "YUNA" ALONZO on Sunday were the "Kakabakang Idol" award, a special honor given to the "most unique and controversial talent" in the reality talent search program "Philippine Idol" on ABC-5.

With the Whitney Houston original "Why Does It Hurt So Bad," Yuna beat six other nominees in the award handed at the "Idol" Theater of 6th Megamall in Mandaluyong. Yuna is the only nonbeauty from among the seven nominees to have made it to the competition's top-4-ship.

On Saturday night, nominees Yuna, John Janrico "Jack" Perey, Wrigdon "John" Dukay, Lalaine Enriquez, Jhonalyn "Jhona" Sibao, Sharyll Anne "Shaina" Buenafe and Leonard Ocampo performed before a different set of judges consisted of host/comedian Ariesll Ignacio, Idol Basha and Showbiz Insyder Jill Ireland (minus the initial "Kiss" screenings and brought home the highly coveted Golden Ticket.

Jhona sang the "Idol-ya-1" anthem, her signature song. Jack performed his audition piece, "Broken Vow" and danced the trials during the interview/meet part of the song. He also gave the audience instant dance lessons.

Lalaine paid tribute to her gay friends with the song "Di Ako Bakla," originally sung by special judge Regine.

THE 12 finalists in a production number

YUNA Alonzo sings the "Kakabakang Idol" title.

Shaina, who went onstage in a maid's uniform, left everyone in stitches with her performance of "Yaya Mommy Po," with the special participation of musical director Mel Villena as "Sisa."

John failed to do his famous split due to an injury he suffered in one of the episodes of "I Love Philippine Idol," but still managed to entertain the viewers with a wacky song-and-dance number.

This Saturday, the battle for the G rail six shall begin with performances from finalists Lisa Magbanua, Raymund Lopez, Ate Rose Rose, Miguel Mendoza, Jhon Vladez, Gru Bright, Jose Clarore, Amanda Cruz, Apple Chiu, Jeff Waters, Stef Lozaro and Mac Macaraeg.

One contestant will be eliminated on Sunday.

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GB1	1	FLYBOYS			2	ZOOM	
GB3	1?	FLYBOYS			2?	ZOOM	
	3		4		5	STEP UP	
ATC	1?	ZOOM			2	FLYBOYS	
	3	FIRST DAY HIGH	4		5	STEP UP	
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Mr. Jazzman as entrepreneur

By Pablo A. Tariman
Contributor

IS HOWIE THE JAZZ MISSION OF "Mamma Leone" and "Yanni" anywhere close to running a bar biz?

Where does the soloist of the performer begin and that of the businessman end?

We are posing these questions to Richard Merk, who marks his fourth year as owner and manager of Merk's Bar Bistro this month.

"I began to absorb the real feel of business more after a few months," he confides. "But I never really stop learning. Going to the bar bistro every day felt like going back to a classroom and my teacher was no other than what transpired that night."

In the same bar bistro, Richard sings with jazz and non-jazz friends on Wednesdays while running it on days a week except Sundays.

"It feels great," he says. "It's like watching your baby turn four."

Which means that while he keeps track of his jazz repertoire and booking corporate events in his reel, he must make sure that his chef, waiters and waitresses and bartenders are all doing their jobs well.

He once became burned in the past four years as well as the do's and don'ts.

"I learned a lot, especially patience," he says. "First of all, you must never stop communicating with your staff. You must be creative all the time. With your clients, you must be sensitive to their needs."

Richard recalls the bar's opening night: "The restaurant was the size we didn't work. But people stayed just the same. There is demand on me that they really came for the music and to give us moral support."

He admits he learned to absorb the manager's touch by just observing what went on in the places he performed be in the past.

As performer, he has gone onstage in jazz and folk hangouts here and abroad like Birds of the Asian Feather, Viscount, Gerry Brookes of the Philippine Plaza, the Sheraton Hotel in Hua Hin, Thailand and the Royal Hotel in Aman, Jordan, among others.

"You can say that I've learned the business side of entertainment from life. In fact, my experience is the best teacher."

The last four years saw Angela Dolfil, (his mother) Annie Brazil, Dodoo Wilson, Marilu Herrera, Ted Fuentes, Moe David, Pilita Corrales and Gary Valenciano perform at his bar.

In some processes, Lea Salonga obliged with songs from "Les Miserables."

On lucky nights, even the likes of Cecile Licad and Ocsaid Gonzaga performed through Richard's power of persuasion.

Incognito, Licad was just enjoying her drink when Richard announced to the audience: "Are you aware that there is a national treasure in the room?"

It was only upon seeing the crowd's insistence that Licad stood up and played Chopin on a Clavinova piano.

"Isn't that amazing?" Richard recounts. "Apart from Licad, we even got surprise visits from Imelda Romualdez-Marcos who always obliges with a song or two."

While his bistro bar was making good, Richard also made sure that the place does fundraising for friends in show biz.

But as it is, Merk's remains a place where seasoned artists can renew ties with their followers and where campy-ple talents can woo new fans.

Filmmaker takes on critics in the ring

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA—THREE of criticism of his films, controversial Germ film director Uwe Boll ironized four of his critics in a Vancouver boxing ring.

The director of the recently released vampire flick "BloodRayne," based on a video game and starring Kristanna Loken and Ben Kingsley, issued a fight challenge to his critics several months ago. Others responded.

"Like the critics note," Boll told reporters minutes after the fights on Saturday, "Everybody who was in the ring showed balls. Nobody lived.

"If they write about my movies without even seeing them then it's really unnerving. If you make a movie like 'History of the Dead,' a zombie movie, what are they expecting? 'Schindler's List'?"

First in the ring with the director—now dubbed "Ringing" Boll—was Richard Kyanka of Lee's Summit, Missouri, webmaster of www.somethingawful.com. He stunned the ring vital by losing a unanimous decision.

"You are bothering a terrorist," he said of Boll as the Canadian erased of about 600. "You are all guilty." A grim-faced Boll then won the fight in a first-round knockout.

Jeff Snyder of Los Angeles, a journalist with Aint'It Cool News, also lost in a technical knockout in the first round after Snyder's trainer threw in the towel.

He said Boll, 41, had told him it was just a joke, a public relations stunt.

"They're injured beating the crap out of my head," he said. "I think he's a jerk. The stupid bit [Mr. Boll] didn't want to keep getting punched in the head."

Chris Alexander of Toronto, Ontario, a horror movie journalist with Rue Morgue radio and magazine, also went down in a knockout.

Fake blood

But, while on the receiving end of a series of blows to the head, Alexander took Boll aback when a stream of blood spewed from his mouth. It turned out Alexander had taken syrup from Boll's filmmaking book, the blood was fake.

He said he got in a punch for each of Boll's bad films. "I think I got him once in the face for 'Alone in the Dark' and I got maybe one or two for 'BloodRayne,'" he said. "I have absolutely no regrets. This is the weirdest pop culture bizarre journalism stunt I've ever been involved in."

Before the fight Alexander said he had an intention of hitting Boll solo.

"Mr. Boll is the anti-Christ and we are punching him down," Alexander said as he stepped into the ring.

Steiner Chance Mattias, a website writer from Fredrick, Maryland, was the youngest fighter at 17. The amateur boxer also scored down in a unanimous knockout.

Boll is also subject of an online petition for him to stop making films. Boll had specifically targeted fellow filmmakers Roger Avary and Quentin Tarantino for a fight but neither responded.

Now, however, Boll said he's ready to fight married auto mechanic Jean-Claude Van Damme.

"I think he's a pussy," said Boll. "He cannot take a hit and he cannot throw a hit."

Boll's next picture is "In the Name of the King: A Dungeon Siege Tale."

Like "BloodRayne," it's also based on a video game. It features Lukas again as well as Jason Statham, John Rhys-Davies, Ray Liotta, Matthew Lillard, Leelee Sobieski, Claire Forlani and Burt Reynolds. Jeremy Reimenschneider, AP

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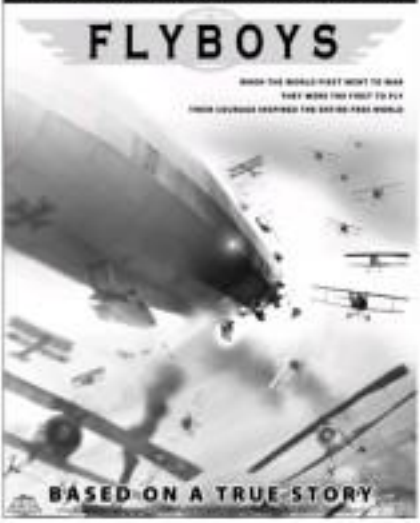

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2 TWILIGHT DANCERS	6 FLY BOYS
3 ZOOM	6 POSSESSED BY EVIL
4 DEAD OR ALIVE	7 STEP UP THE BREED

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ROUNDUP

Oil spill on 'Shorts'

"FILIPINO SHORT Films From the Oil Spill," a four-leg collection of short films on the oil spill tragedy in Western Visayas, will air on ABC 5's "Shorts," on Sept. 30 at 10 p.m.

The Cinemalaya shorts is a compilation of films directed by independent filmmakers Mike De, Emmie de la Cruz, Arik Cupeta, Paulo Villalobos, Wilfred Galila, Hilbar Dalisdis, Khiel de Guia, JP Carpio, Jocelino Isinilon, Nina Mariz, Nestor, Antonette Marie de la Cruz, Steve Villanueva, Ined Bogalecon and Oscar Jaena.

The filmmakers flew to Guimaras early September to shoot a 15-minute short film each on the oil spill, capturing on camera activities which began in Manila, then in Iloilo and in Guimaras. The five-minute version of the movies will be aired on "Shorts."

The project, a tie-up with ABC 5 and the Independent Filmmakers Cooperative of the Philippines (IFC), aims to create awareness among the general public on the effects of the worst disaster, Manuel K. Cruz

PIA Arcangel-Habit

Kiss cancer goodbye

Only seven years of release have relatives or friends who are breast cancer victims, thus the appearance/attire symbolizing Arena's "Say Goodbye for Breast Cancer" (SBBC) drive.

Joining the campaign are "Danny Has a" Scott Actor/Choreo, Joni Estrada-Abreu, Host hostings, Host Sandi Cruz Chika. Other supporters include Cristine Moreno, Pia Arcangel-Habit, Leo Martinez, Boy2 Quirino, Jun Mata, Icel Pre-and Cesar Domingo.

A simultaneous "Global Walk Against Breast Cancer" will be held at 6:30 a.m. on Oct. 22 at the Mall of Asia in Manila, Rizal Park in Bacolod City and DV Bata comes Tano Hotz Street in Guiguinto Del Sur.

To join the walk, call 844-2800.

Cat Stevens hits pope

LONDON—Singer Cat Stevens, known as Yusuf Islam after his conversion to Islam, hit Pope Benedict XVI on Sunday for his controversial comments about Islam.

In a speech in Germany earlier this month, Benedict quoted a Byzantine emperor as from medieval times calling some of the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad "evil and inhuman."

The singer, whose hits "Moon Shadow" and "Peace Train" made him a star in the '70s, said in an interview with the British Broadcasting Corp. that the Pope's words proved that he was not infallible. AP

Filipino connection in global entertainment

TODAY'S PIECE HAS TWO PARTS: THE first deals with Filipinos who have been making it in global entertainment, while the second touches on the importance of a Filipino-B interest in production shots abroad and his chance to click with viewers here.

Filipino entertainers abroad include key members of the Blackeyed Peas and the Pussycat Dolls. The success that these two groups are currently enjoying makes local fans proud and contributes the belief that Pinoy talents are "world class."

On UCTV show biz magazine shows like "Entertainment Tonight" and "The Insider" feature Fil-Am junior co-hosts Nicholle Brando and Shannon Mendiola, respectively.

We've heard watching both programs for quite a while, and can report that both Fil-Am talents are now being given more topics to cover... a sign that they're moving up in the US TV world.

And Mendiola is amassing even more extensive show days because she's dating Mark Lackey, Jessica Alba's ex-boyfriend (former hubby).

In Hollywood, the Fil-Ams who have been getting plum roles include Rob Schneider, Tia Carrere, Lou Diamond Phillips and producer Dean Devlin ("Independence Day"), whose latest movie, "Flyboys," is about to open in town.

In world theater, aside from the Pinoys in all-Asian productions of "Miss Saigon," promising comers include the stars of the Wicked theater company in New York City, a number of whom have crossed over to starring in indie movies.

In the performance arts, a number of Filipino soloists and groups have won top prizes in international singing competitions, and our dancers have proven to be similarly outstanding.

And Filipino movies have been garnering awards in festivals abroad, affirming the exceptional ability of our film artists, both in front and behind the camera.

Afterall, however, we feel that Filipino talent "treasure of souls" has yet to come, in the form of significant number to international film or television.

Still former Ms. Teen USA Vanessa Minillo (in '97?) is still the first significant global Pinoy star to a bystanders listed celebrities who will endure to remain to prominence and popularity in the extremely competitive field of global entertainment?

Now, to the Filipino element needed for an imported production to do exceptionally well abroad. Our two prime examples are "American Idol" and "Fear Factor."

When "Idol" fielded Filipino finalists like Jasmine Trias and Camille Velasco and they survived almost all the way to the end, the show garnered record viewers locally. But, the year that Jenny Perlada was eliminated early on, local viewers had no one to root for; the Pinoy connection was weak, so interest and sympathy were powered out.

The same thing happened to "Fear Star" last year, when Fil-Iconic Meg Arenas gave eventual winner Jo Rohner reason to sweep. This year, however, there was no Pinoy anywhere in sight in the televised competition, so viewers' enthusiasm level was decidedly lower.

Fact is, the Philippines may be regarded by some as a third-world country, but in mediums for entertainment products has made it an important show biz destination.

Therefore, international productions would do well to encourage a Pinoy connection in their casting, to make their showing in the even equal your Filipino market more outspoken and profitable.

Superman on DVD

Superman's shelf-packed story is now on DVD, from comic books to TV to movies, including awesome advance footage from 2006's "Superman Returns." The "Amazing Story of Superman" DVD includes retrospective features and interviews with filmmakers and stars.

On HGC

Watch out for those special hours on the National Geographic Channel.

Tonight at 8, "Blood Ties: Afghanistan Unveiled," Emmy-nom of 10 pics., "Women Gorilla Us-tomate Dessert Sidenus." Sept. 30 at 8 p.m., "Sea Hunter: Days 2."

Nestor U. Torre

Fil-Ams have been going places

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SUN. 28, 2006

Dilana, new rock royalty

By Fred Katigbak

DILANA SORCUESO, runner-up of the reality TV evaluation "Rock Star: Supernova," has already been one very determined lady.

At 2 a.m. in Los Angeles (about 5 p.m. in Manila on Sept. 15, the winner phoned to announce from memory by saying of becoming a concert dancer for no just to show that had earlier been canceled.

"This is the only free time I've had," said Dilana, with her distinctly deep, raspy voice. "I have been talking to the media for three days and I haven't had a lot of sleep."

The 24-year-old rocker was the only female to reach the show's finale, which was broadcast live in the Philippines through Jojo World.

Australian Toby Steel, Icelandic Magni Asgeirsson, and eventual winners and Rock Star Supernova front man Lukas Rossi of Canada joined Dilana in the Top 4.

Completing the near-band are its programmers, rock diva Gilby Clarke (lead & lead), guitarist Jason Hovanesi (Metallica), bassist, and Tommy Lee (Motley Crüe), drummer.

With solid vocals and a penchant for taking on challenging songs every week, Dilana was a strong contender until her controversial breakdown a few weeks before the finals.

She took flak for speaking too candidly in the media about the other rockers, especially Lukas.

"From one hour to the next, he's (Lukas) a different person," Dilana said during a press junket at the "Rock Star" mansion. "Every now and then, he gets out little nerve in me that just makes me want to punch his lights out."

Asked if those were had blood between her and Lukas now, Dilana said, "I've made it look bad." Lukas ever offered to give an apology for her forthcoming album, she said.

Marching band

Despite criticism on her songwriting abilities by the show's jurors, Dilana doesn't seem to have lost the drive to push her solo career forward.

Exec Hoover, Bass, Gunnel guitarist and "Rock Star" co-producer, said Gilby Clarke, in fact, volunteered to help produce her very first album in the US.

On the weekend of the interview, Dilana was due to meet Gilby at the studios to discuss the project.

She will also join Magni and Jesse Lange, her closest friends on the show. Today, the "Rock Star" hosts MSG and Point Concert in 20 key states, a Rock Star Supernova concert concert tour.

Dilana's love of music was solidified at age 15, when she left her home in Johannesburg, South Africa, to become a professional musician.

Together with her European band, Dilana produced and performed hits in parts of the continent, including Holland and mainland Lanai she settled in Houston, Texas, as a solo act.

"In some ways it can be lonely," she said about the life on the road. "You get to a point where you're a mean bit of people and see first alone, but it depends on the people you surround yourself with."

Proud to call herself a rocker, the well-traveled rocker speaks fluent English, Dutch and her native Afrikaans language.

As entertainment awards, it seems, runs early attracted Dilana to riding Harleys but, most importantly developed her eclectic taste in music. "It's hard to say one particular thing," she said of her musical preferences. "Whatever the style... as long as it has intensity."

Among the artists Dilana says that she admires are Janis Joplin, Stevie Nicks, Jewel, a la Dream, Led Zeppelin and AC/DC.

As to how long she intends to make music, the answer was quick. "Till the day I die—I'm going to be the female Johnny Cash."

Final name: Rock Star Supernova

LOS ANGELES — A star born California punk band has settled with the CBS reality show "Rock Star: Supernova" over the date of the Supernova band's name.

Under the agreement, announced last week, the band band will keep its original name and the TV band will be known as "Rock Star Supernova."

The original Supernova, which recorded three albums under the name starting in 1991, sued CBS, the show's producers and Mark the band Project Nova in June claiming unfair competition and trademark infringement.

"Rock Star: Supernova" begins airing July 5, with 15 contestants.

The winner, Lukas Rossi, named on the show's final episode, is expected to tour with the band—Rock Star Supernova, that is—and appear on its album. The group's first performance is scheduled for New Year's Eve in Las Vegas. AP

'Il Mare' was here

By Oliver M. Palamburk

CONTRIBUTOR

THE BIGGEST BOX-OFFICE FEMALE "The Lake House" refused movie-goers into the role of wealthy-attorney romance just a few months ago. Would his lovers separated by time, played by Sandra Bullock and Keanu Reeves, converse by sending each other letters through a "magic" mailbox outside their lakeside house. That reinterpretation of the hit-movie "Il Mare" worked in ours magic, its leveling, unchanging love story that natural-born of Hollywood's most charismatic and bankable stars.

Its source material is similarly charming, and prominent an aesthetic consistency of its own. Hoon Jeon during the recently completed Korean Film Festival 2006 at the UP Film Institute, "Il Mare" is a subtly spellbinding film opposable even when you're more familiar with the mundane version. The same vision-creating concept battles, in its cinematic-plotted chronological intensity that inevitably allows an impossible connection correspondence between two strangers, architect Seung-hyun Jung-hae Lee and writer talent

JUN HYUN Jae in "Il Mare"

Eun-hee Lee Hoon Jeon.

In 1997, Jung-hyun moves into a new, one-year lonable home and encounters it "Il Mare (The Inn)," while Eun-hee, in 1999, leaves the same occupant of the same house a note requesting that her mail be forwarded to her new address. Puzzled as the dates contain an unbeguiled letters, the pair think it's a deliberate joke at first, until they discover that the mailbox miraculously transports its contents to the recipient's time period.

The resumed friendship develops, but their eventual rendezvous in Eun-hee's time doesn't happen, for reasons that aren't connected early on, unlike in "Lake House."

The Korean actors have their own appeal. Jung-hae Lee is more believable than Keanu Reeves as someone who designs houses for a living (a doctor, the female character here works in a post-office), and Jun Hyun Jae—who's from doing voices for puppet-show actors in children's shows, instead of a child-book, as one recorder is removed from the past, and so on. The developing "long-distance" relationship feels real. In this sense, "Il Mare" is more than a date movie, it becomes debatable which movie has a better ending.

There are details in the comedian of "Il Mare" that aren't so closely defined in "Lake House." When Seung-hyun and Jung-hyun romantically merge with history to connect that their love will survive, it's almost comical. Some of them forgot the time-jumping connection. But it still ends on a positive note, so even if no Save "Lake House" to give a simpler, more fair take-like ending, "Il Mare" still functions well and furnishes a romantic movie-watching.

"Il Mare" is a restful, hopeful tale about seizing control of destiny. Its atmosphere meshes nicely with the gracefully paced score. It's slowly quieter and heard down, but the visuals are more artistically rendered. This movie is less overplotted than its eventual descendant in terms of character history (we longday lashes-no-angst here), but it's truly worth watching.

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Rudy's cyst is 'gay'

AFTER CONQUERING THE BIGGIES, journeying through space and other enchanting worlds in "Final Fantasy," imagination on a recent Angelean reader like me. The mysteries of this mythical underwater theatre "Atlantika" will be unveiled weeknights beginning Oct. 2.

A bounty of elaborate sets, props and costumes (which include state-of-the-art diving suits), animated visual effects, UP singers and hotel-hunting underwater choreography. The actors even had to train in scuba diving and Filipino blade-fighting combat or Kali Pekiti Tirsia.

Bringsheng Fuentes replied to the visits to you in Aquarius: **Rudy Fernandez** plays a mere cyst in one of his films, one of his best productions who will cast in Aquarius to costar.

After his critical speculation, Dolloy is back in fighting form. "No percentage rumor from my sources. Bahasa nga ang doc sa cyst ko nasa it's neither malignant nor benign. Somehow, parang kahit daw no cyst yong ka-mahe. Pang show ba talaga yun? Intersex ang gusto ko [laughs]!" What about politics? "Pass na lang muna ako dyan at baka mahalata na ako!"

In lovers **Jean Garcia** and **Camila Sarmenta** are also part of the cast. Will "billionaire" host **Antonio Aquitania** be in the mix as well?

So much excitement in the air just to turn the tides of your TV viewing.

Just asking

● Dennis Trillo and Carlene Aguilar are local ensemble of the Classical crowd at the Philippine Plaza but they were quite event during the party. The ex(?) lovers seemed nervous when TV cameras started rolling. Maybe they just wanted a little privacy? There's nothing wrong with bumping out with your ex but it could also mean that you're still hung up on each other.

● Could it be true that other young stars in ABS-CBN are feeling insecure because of the grand debut that the Dingdong network is planning for **Maja Salvador** at the Cuneta Pavilion next month? Never her stellar performance in "Sinner." Maja deserves nothing less. She no-does have an reason to earn million at round the debut night.

● After 40 hot celebrities, are **Bimby Aquino** and her ex-Migoy ready going to have an out-of-court settlement? The estranged couple seemed quite civil with Chito and Sheryl during some games each other on national TV. Somehow, working days' lines in public can make lovescenes easier.

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

● The redheads Dreams are slated to direct the next season of "Bahay Mo" in Japan. Won't they be lured to stay there and probably make a movie à la "Memoirs of a Geisha" and/or "Japayuki?"

● Will GMA-CBS do a remake of "Helmets vs. Rangers"? Hmm! But they are eyeing either **Dolphin Bermoma** or **Rico Barrameda** to play the title role as Bagito. Also being considered are **Alma Bagasbas** and **Rich de los Alas**. "Bongo, Bongo on the Beat! Who's the baboy of them all?"

Tagpuan

For those of you who miss its drama, her digital film "Tagpuan" will be shown exclusively in starting Sept. 27 at SM cinemas nationwide.

The film was shot entirely in the US where the Superstar is now based. She plays Bea, an illegal immigrant, who marries an American (played by **John Robert Parker Jr.** as John Smalzer) to legitimize her stay in the US. Bea later finds herself falling in love to a man she never thought she could have.

It could only remind you of all the stories my Mo used to tell me about the Day and Johnlo turbulent romance.

Hmm ... explosive movie material, I dare say.

Candy Fair

Get your chance to meet the "Get Wild Candy Cuties" at the Candy Bar! This delicious event is happening set Sept. 30, at The Fort Bonifacio Strip. Gates open at 10 a.m. Buying an issue of this month's Candy magazine is the ticket to this confectionary bash.

Bamboo Day

Sept. 11 is marked as Bamboo Day for Albayanons as Bamboo broke the record of all events held in Albay Adventure Legazpi City).

Rushed to any good friend Mari Pamela of Big Pamalee Entertainment for a successful event!

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